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Consuming Italy
*Contemporary Material Culture and Ethnographic Approaches
in Modern Languages*

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Italian Studies

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Notes on interview transcripts

The thesis uses the following symbols in the transcription of oral interviews:

.	Falling intonation	That was foolish.
,	Continued contour	I took bread, butter, jam and honey.
?	Questioning intonation	Who what that?
!	Exclamatory utterance	Look!
(2.0)	Pause of about 2 seconds	So (2.0) what are we going to do?
(...)	Pause of about 1 second	In front of (...) the table
(..)	Pause of about 0.5 second	Then (..) she just (..) left
(.)	Micropause	Put it (.) away
=	Latched utterances	A: We saw her yesterday = B: = And she looked fine.
—	Emphasis	Put it <u>away</u> .
-¶	Cut off	All of the pl- the floor.
:	Sound stretching	We waited for a lo::::ng time
[]	Extra details	Leave it alone [moves book].
[...]	Omission	He said he did [...]. Yeah he did.
(xxx)	Unclear audio	I bought it from (xxxx)

These conventions are adapted from those suggested by Keith Richards in *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that its contents have not been submitted for a degree at another University.

Revised sections of Chapter III have been published in the following article:

Georgia Wall, 'Foodways, Campervans and the Terms of Mobility: Transnational Belonging, Home, and Heritage in the Narrative of "Sud Italia".' *Humanities*, 5.2 (2016), 23. DOI: <<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/5/2/23>>

Revised sections of Chapter IV, section ii are undergoing peer review as part of the following article:

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Except where stated, all translations are my own.

Thesis abstract

This thesis has two interlinked objectives. One is to explore some of the meanings projected onto ideas of Italy in the UK in relation to Italian mobility patterns. The second is to argue for the development of the study of material culture and ethnographic approaches in contemporary Modern Languages research and teaching. Taking into account a range of 'Italian stuff'; public spaces such as cafés and bars, narrative texts and recipe books, a celebrity figure, and drawing on personal narratives as recounted in interview, the thesis critically engages with the contemporary value of images of traditional Italy from a Modern Languages perspective. The aim is to practically demonstrate how ethnography and the study of material culture can be used to complement the conventional disciplinary emphasis of Modern Languages on critical analysis of written and visual texts and on linguistic competence.

Drawing on the work of a variety of ethnographic theorists of the significance of the everyday and the unexpected, of the interplay between power and selfhood, and of class and the inscription of value, the thesis explores the ideals read into notions of Italy's authenticity across different sites in terms of the tensions between the desirability of a grounded, local identity and the simultaneous need to be able to distance oneself from it, generational class difference and its enduring memory, the diversity of rural and urban experience, and self-understanding and expression. Via case-studies of different sites and an investigation into the pertinence of an ethnographic reflexivity in the context of language learning, it places relevant contemporary anthropological, linguistic and sociological theory in dialogue with existing calls for renewal from within Modern Languages to practice an ethnographic approach to the study of language and culture.

Introduction

Objectives of the thesis within the context of ‘Transnationalizing Modern Languages’

Modern Languages as an academic discipline is widely reported to be in state of crisis as undergraduate admissions continue to fall, dedicated language degree courses are reduced, and University language departments are closed.¹ At the same time, there is a growing public recognition of the UK as a multilingual environment, and of the crucial importance of linguistic communication skills in today’s interconnected reality.² In a moment when Higher Education in the UK is obliged to reflect upon its role,³ investigating how approaches from within Modern Languages can comment on, relate and contribute to the contemporary world seems not only opportune, but essential.

The research for this thesis was undertaken in the context of the 2013-2016 AHRC ‘Transnationalizing Modern Languages’ project (‘TML’), which aimed to address these issues by going beyond the ‘container’ of the nation-state to explore linguistic and cultural translation and the experiences of mobility embedded in Italy’s recent history.⁴ From the onset, the intention was to work transnationally in a self-reflexive and critically reflective manner. But what does this formidable objective actually mean? I’ll begin by explaining what I mean by ‘transnational’ and ‘critical’ and highlighting the particular nuances my project chases.

¹ See for example the British Academy position paper, ‘Languages Matters’, 3 June 2009, online: <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/LanguageMatters2_0.pdf> [accessed 21 October 2016]; within the press, Anna Bawden, ‘Modern languages: degree courses in freefall’, *Guardian*, 8 October 2013, online: <<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/08/modern-foreign-language-degrees-axed>> [accessed 21 October 2016].

² See for example, ‘AULC/UCML/HEA Survey of IWLPs’, 2 March 2015, online: <<http://www.ucml.ac.uk/news/253>>; [accessed 21 October 2016]; British Council policy document, ‘Languages for the Future’, November 2013, online: <<https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages-for-the-future-report-v3.pdf>> [accessed 21 October 2016]; within the press, Holly Young, ‘Myth: young people have abandoned language learning’, *Guardian*, 2 November 2015, online: <<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/nov/02/myth-young-people-have-abandoned-language-learning>> [accessed 21 October 2016].

³ Les Back, *Academic Diary: Or Why Higher Education Still Matters* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2016), p. 3.

⁴ Transnationalizing Modern Languages, online: <<http://www.transnationalmodernlanguages.ac.uk/>> [last accessed 22 August 2017].

Examining the extent of a ‘trans-national turn’ in Italian Studies, Emma Bond has proposed that a ‘stretching or going beyond the confines of national boundaries (be that in cultural, spatial or temporal terms)’ is one of the most evident layers of meaning of the term.⁵ Drawing on the work of Aihwa Ong and Steven Vertovec, Bond stresses how the flexibility and fluidity – both in terms of individual agency, and in styles and practices – alluded to by transnational can ‘muddle notions of the national as fixed in time and space’.⁶ At the same time, she points to an ‘explicit relationality’ between the ‘trans’ and the ‘national’.⁷ Nina Glick Schiller’s reading of transnationality similarly emphasizes ‘the concept of nationality embedded yet problematized by the term’.⁸ So we can say that a transnational perspective is one which simultaneously questions *and* emphasises the idea of the nation.

During the research for this project, I have been consistently struck by the vigour with which a sense of the national is sustained and reinforced in everyday acts beyond the geographical confines of Italy’s borders. ‘Si scopre così che nessuno è più italiano di chi vive all’estero’ (‘you find out that there’s no-one more Italian than an Italian living abroad’), writes Forte, describing the Italian community of Bedford as ‘più meridionale dei meridionali’ (‘more Southern than the Southerners’).⁹ Two little jars I noticed in the kitchen of Salvatore and Lino, Neapolitans living and working in London to whom I was introduced to as potential gate-keepers, have generated the most enduring image of this trope in my own investigation. ‘Gate-keeper’ is the term used in ethnographic research to describe a figure who facilitates contact with participants and assists in access to sites of investigation, but as we chatted about my project, I found myself considering their home a site of investigation in its own right: my gaze kept returning to the two apparently empty transparent jars above their kitchen sink.

⁵ Emma Bond, ‘Towards a Trans-national Turn in Italian Studies’, *Italian Studies*, 69.3 (November 2014), 415-24 (p. 416).

⁶ Bond p. 416, cf. Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999), and Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁷ Bond, p. 416.

⁸ Nina Glick Schiller, ‘Transnationality, Migrants and Cities: A Comparative Approach’, in *Beyond Methodological Nationalism: Research Methodologies for Cross-Border Studies*, ed. by Anna Amelina, Devrim D. Nergiz, Thomas Faist, and Nina Glick Schiller (Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 23-40 (p. 23).

⁹ Alessandro Forte, *La Londra degli italiani. Dai penny ice alla City: due secoli di emigrazione* (Reggio Emilia: Aliberti editore, 2012), p. 17.

‘Da Napule’ (‘From Naples’), a hand-written sticker on one said; the second, ‘nel caso che vi manca l’aria’ (‘in case you can’t breathe’).

Of course, this emphatic investment in the national is not confined to Italian mobility patterns. The ‘unstable, tense and discontinuous social fields of diaspora’, Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigby suggest, may constitute ‘the most important site of national memory today’.¹⁰ Highlighting that ideas of the nation are often most profoundly felt and enacted by those who, for various reasons, are conscious of their distance from it may be a statement of the obvious. But as Daniel Miller points out, often the most productive paths of inquiry are those which begin with questioning the ‘taken-for-granted’, examining exactly what it means to us and how it has come to be the case:

There is a wonderfully felicitous phrase, the ‘blindingly obvious’. This implies that when something is sufficiently evident it can reach a point at which we are blinded to its presence, rather than reminded of its presence. One of the problems we have in persuading people that the study of blue denim is so significant is that its ubiquity seems to make people regard it as less of interest, rather than of more interest.¹¹

Instead of just accepting the contemporary interest for Italian cuisine as the latest culinary trend, or the appeal of traditional rural Italian lifestyles as linked to a British desire for holidays in sunny places, the thesis will tease out some of the themes embedded in these images of Italy that are created through mobility beyond and across the geographical borders of the nation-state. It will query the nostalgic gaze through which this Italy is fashioned, examine the value read onto affiliation with it in personal heritage narratives, probe into the meaning of its authenticity, analyse the terms of its articulation, and ultimately, reflect on the consequences of this inquiry for the study of language and culture. In conducting this inquiry in London, where I live, I also want to highlight to the reader new to ethnographic approaches that ethnography isn’t related to having the funds or the free time to travel to far-away places,¹² but is about a sensitive and questioning engagement with the surrounding

¹⁰ Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigby, ‘Introduction’, in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, ed. by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigby (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014), pp. 1-25 (p. 6).

¹¹ Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), p. 51.

¹² Miller, p. 32.

context - something that can, with the right guidance and support, be practiced anywhere (and on a student budget). This is not to say that ethnography does not bring with it its own challenges and imperatives, and I will devote space to reflecting on these in the conclusion of the thesis. For now, though, back to the transnational.

My interpretation of the transnational is also informed by Nataša Durovicová's argument, in relation to transnational film studies, that the term is tied to questions of power and mobility. Like Bond, Durovicová plays on the connotations of the prefix 'trans-', suggesting that in contrast to the relationship of parity denoted by 'inter-', or the totality bound up in ideas of the 'global', the 'transnational' implies relations of unevenness and mobility.¹³ The subtle ways in which perceptions of power, or lack of it, are related to personal and community identity emerged as a recurring themes of this project, and so accepting the transnational as a site in which a diverse social and geo-political relations play out on a variant but unequal scale, as Durovicová stresses, is a useful lens for shedding light on how an individual's sense of self and belonging at stake in these cases operate on different and perhaps conflicting levels; national, local, familial, personal.¹⁴

Finally, for my purposes, it is useful to recall the etymological implications of the 'trans' of transnational as 'across': when I refer to the 'transnational' I am concerned with sites that implicate movement across national borders. Specifically, the sites my study centres on are all in some way explicitly born out of movement between Italy and England. This is why I call them 'transnational Italian sites'.

This brings us to the question of being critical. A critical perspective is generally taken to mean one that offers an alternative reading to the dominant understanding. But why? I have often wondered whether the work of academia is just an additive project; replacing one reading with another reading which in time will be duly questioned. It was with gratitude and relief that I read Alastair Pennycook's musings on the 'weight' of criticality, in which he suggests that sense of being productively disruptive has

¹³ Nataša Durovicová, 'Preface', in *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Nataša Durovicová and Kathleen E. Newman (New York: Routledge, 2010) p. ix-x, cited in *Transnational Stardom: International Celebrity in Film and Popular Culture*, ed. by Russell Meeuf and Raphael Raphael (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 2.

¹⁴ Durovicová, pp. ix-x.

been obscured by the over-use of the term.¹⁵ My stressing of the unexpected as a productive site of inquiry stems from Pennycook's invitation to consider 'language in unexpected places' as a means of shedding light on normative visions of the expected.¹⁶ Pennycook builds on Monica Heller's argument that

As soon as we start looking closely at real people in real places, we see movement. We see languages turning up in unexpected places, and not turning up where we expect them to be. We also see them taking unexpected forms. Just moving to an idea of bilingualism is not enough containment for this movement and multiplicity, probably not under any circumstances, but certainly not under current ones.¹⁷

Apprehending and interpreting some of this movement of real people in real places through an accessible mix of personal narrative and attention to 'mnemonic traces', Pennycook's deconstruction of the ethnically authentic self, grounded in a diverse (and again, unexpected!) collection of primary material ranging from cheese to farewell addresses to British colonial managers, is persuasive evidence for the value in understanding criticality as thinking about 'not only new sites of power but also new modes and articulations of meaning making'.¹⁸ I especially appreciated Pennycook's description of 'liberal ostrichism' – the effect produced by burying one's head in the sand of an objectivism that neglects the reality of a broader social context and agenda.¹⁹ The alternative that Pennycook offers, and the understanding that this thesis embraces, is to understand critical thinking as a way of 'problematizing practice', of 'thinking otherwise'.²⁰ The goal is not to replace one form of generating and representing knowledge with another, but to continually challenge assumptions of centrality whilst concurrently questioning one's own position.

From this perspective, it is possible to embark on the ethical task not only of seeking to understand different forms of politics but also of

¹⁵ Alastair Pennycook, *Language and Mobility: Unexpected Places* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012), p. 129.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁷ Monica Heller, 'The future of bilingualism', in *Bilingualism: A Social Approach*, ed. by Monica Heller (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 340-45 (p. 343).

¹⁸ Pennycook, p. xviii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

provincializing those European frames of knowledge that have come to dominate what counts as the critical. At the very least, viewing the critical in terms of problematizing practice or critical resistance gives us a way of working in language education that does not reduce critical work either to the domain of critical thinking or to modernist frameworks of emancipatory rationality, while simultaneously keeping questions of language, discourse, power and identity to the fore. It is not so much that this problematizing practice should replace these other perspectives but rather that we need to be of three minds, to hold these different ideas simultaneously: we need to think critically, to draw on that long history of critical work and to problematize our practices.²¹

Pennycook also draws out the notion of timeliness in criticality, suggesting that good teaching ought to seize the critical moment, 'a point of significance, an instance where things can change'.²²

Via a targeted, immersive reading of specific sites, and by recognising the value of participant discourse as a critical perspective as well as primary material, the thesis espouses Pennycook's understanding of critical as much as his attention to local practices and resourceful speakers. In doing so, it aims to open up ways of approaching the questions of people, place, and communication at the core of Modern Languages as a discipline. For the purposes of this thesis, a transnational critical approach is one that looks beyond the geographical confines of Italy to concentrate on cultural practice over identity politics – what people do rather than who they are – and considers how this mode of inquiry could work to problematize practice within the traditional paradigms of Italian Studies.

Working towards this objective has meant getting to grips with material, methods, and ways of presenting research that to me felt very 'new', having only worked with books and films. Collaborating with a team of varied disciplinary interests and practitioners, a commitment to contribute material to a final exhibition, and the resultant opportunity to work with photographer Mario Badagliacca, have all

²¹ Pennycook, p. 130, via reference to Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²² Pennycook, p. 131.

combined to put me in the fortunate position of being actively encouraged to explore interdisciplinary methods in the context of individual and community cultural exchange between Italy and England.²³ Drawing on the work of one of the project's co-investigators, art psychotherapist Margaret Hills de Zárata, I have focused on the study of material culture and use of participatory ethnography from a Modern Languages perspective. My thesis takes an ethnographic approach to material culture, particularly food-related culture, to examine specific instances of Anglo-Italian cultural encounter and the questions of identity, value, and meaning they raise. In the final part, I attempt to bring some of the implications of this process into the language learning classroom. This report is *not*, therefore, an ethnography of Italian migration to England. As I explain more fully below, I do not want to try to represent this cultural experience. I am concerned instead with the consumer value read into 'being Italian' or 'Italian culture' in relation to individual experience and in light of the broader issues of class and self-understanding that are raised by patterns of mobility between Italy and England. Ultimately, my attention to the creativity and contradictions of identification processes and self-making in relation to Italy seeks to practically demonstrate how an ethnographic perspective can be used to complement the traditional disciplinary emphasis of contemporary cultural study within Modern Languages on written and visual texts and linguistic competence.

I think it is worth underlining at this point my focus on the value of *contemporary* material culture. It seems to me that there is no need to persuade scholars of the early and pre-modern of the critical significance of 'things'. Nor less, indeed, of the utility of a transnational perspective. In this respect, scholars of the contemporary have much to learn from the attention of these perspectives to material culture, and their recognition of the nation-state as a constructed container. It is not therefore a case of undoing the valuable work that is already there or damaging the so-called 'specificity' of the discipline, but of *practically* indicating how ethnographic approaches to the contemporary, and an anthropological interest in material culture to which ethnography is most traditionally applied, might be developed by, and for the benefit of, the Modern Languages student and scholar. As we will explore, the

²³ 'BEYOND BORDERS. Transnational Italy/OLTRE I CONFINI. Italia Transnazionale' exhibition, curated by Viviana Gravano and Giulia Grechi, British School at Rome, 25 October 2016-11 November 2016; Italian Cultural Institute London, 2 December 2016-16 January 2017; various additional locations.

Modern Languages student is particularly well-placed to do this kind of work effectively because of the nature of the questions addressed and practices adopted in Modern Languages study.

With this synchrony in mind, before going into the fine details of precisely how the following chapters will attempt this task in relation to the work of previous scholars and what we will be looking at, let me first define ethnography in relation to language research as this thesis will conceive of it.

Hills De Zárte, accepting ethnography quite literally as ‘writing culture’, explains that:

It is not a specific data collection technique but rather a multiple technique approach, by which the ethnographer can adapt and draw upon a mix of methods appropriate to a situation. Research and data collection takes the form of diverse experiences, workshops, encounters, relationships, observations as opposed to closely structured interviews as it is only as the conversations and interviews progress that the next question emerges.²⁴

Sarah Pink’s definition of ethnography is also helpful:

Ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers’ own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced.²⁵

In both definitions, we see a clear emphasis on encounter and self-reflexivity: balancing the capture and interpretation of socio-cultural behaviour with an awareness of his/her own position within the research field s/he creates, the position

²⁴ Margaret Hills de Zárte, ‘Voice of the object: art psychotherapy and translating cultures’, in *Intercultural Research in Arts Therapies*, ed. by Ditty Dokter, and Margaret Hills de Zárte (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), pp. 152-71 (p. 154).

²⁵ Sarah Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, 2nd edn (London: Sage, 2007), p. 22.

of the ethnographer is premised on a productive liminality. Hills De Zárte suggests that the processes encompassed by broad definitions of 'translation' as inter-lingual, cultural and medial transfer have 'clear parallels' with a culturally sensitive participatory ethnography.²⁶ Developing the work of Celia Roberts, Michael Byram, Ana Barro, Shirley Jordan and Brian Street,²⁷ and Alison Phipps and Mike Gonzalez,²⁸ I want to practically demonstrate that these parallels run both ways. The thesis will argue that an inductive approach to material culture and human practice that is informed by a linguistic sensitivity – by the way in which language mediates human experience – can open up new ways of understanding the work of Modern Languages and the productivity of the labour of language learning as a critical process; one which the learner will continually question the world around them *and their own ways of interpreting, engaging with and expressing it*.

In his memoir *A Life Beyond Borders*, Benedict Anderson sums up these similarities. Addressing the scholar embarking on ethnographic research, Anderson writes:

You feel linguistically deprived, lonely and even isolated, and you hunt around for some fellow nationals to stick with. But then, if you are lucky, you cross the language wall, and find yourself in another world. You are like an explorer, and try to notice and think about everything in a way you would never do at home, where so much is taken for granted. You can no longer take your class position, your education, even your gender, for granted. What you will start to notice, if your ears and eyes are open, are things you can't see or hear. That is, you will begin to notice what is not there as well as what is there, just as you will *become* aware of what is unwritten as well as what is written. And this works both for the country you are living in and the one from which you came.²⁹

²⁶ Hills de Zárte, p. 152.

²⁷ Celia Roberts, Michael Byram, Ana Barro, Shirley Jordan and Brian Street, *Language Learners as Ethnographers* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001).

²⁸ Alison Phipps and Mike Gonzalez, *Modern Languages: Learning and Teaching in an Intercultural Field* (London: Sage Publications, 2004).

²⁹ Benedict Anderson, *A Life Beyond Borders* (Tokyo: NTT publishing, 2009; London and New York: Verso, 2016), pp. 131-132.

Language is foregrounded as a primary site of geographical foreignness in this passage, and this sense of being ‘linguistically deprived’ and the importance of having ‘ears’ as much as eyes open is clearly akin to the experience of studying a foreign language. Understanding the work of Modern Languages, in part, as ethnographic work is therefore perhaps one response to the crisis of the discipline and the related question of the value of Higher Education language study. Faced with the reality of high-quality accessible language teaching software and a prohibitive rise in UK university fees, the question of what a language degree can and should offer is a pressing one. But I think it is also an inspiring one. A cornerstone of this project is Derek Duncan’s laconic retort, when asked whether a transnational approach may be detrimental to linguistic competence, that University language departments ‘are not in the business of making native speakers’.³⁰ What exactly *are* they in the business of, then? And how can they best go about what it is they should be doing?

I don’t think these questions can be answered without first taking a step back and tracking the striking similarities between the sorry predicament of Modern Languages as it is reported today and the state of affairs as it was portrayed in the late nineties and early 2000s.³¹ Over a decade ago, in attempt to address what they described as a ‘profound crisis’ in Modern Languages, Phipps and Gonzalez proposed the concept of ‘*linguaging*’ to promote recognition of the value of language learning in terms of understanding human experience:

Languages are more than skills; they are the medium through which communities of people engage with, make sense of and shape the world. Through language they become active agents in creating their human environment; this process is what we call *linguaging*.³²

In a short and incisive volume *Modern Languages: Learning and Teaching in an Intercultural Field*, Phipps and Gonzalez contrast ‘language learning’ as a commodity with a more meaningful process through which the learner explores ‘the multiple experiences and cultural resonances that are embedded in and accrue to other

³⁰ Derek Duncan in response to a question over how a transnational approach may be detrimental to the development of linguistic competence at the ‘Transnational Modern Languages’ conference, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, London, 2-3 December 2016.

³¹ Phipps and Gonzalez, p. 1.

³² Ibid., pp. 1-2.

languages and their cultures'.³³ Contesting that the fundamental weakness of Modern Languages as a discipline is that it has 'neither the theory nor the method for engaging with the material world',³⁴ they argue for a broader recognition of the work of Modern Languages *and* the materials which form its focus:

Let us imagine a different situation, in which the conversation class was an exchange and comparison of stories, of living tales told by people whose encounter is based on a mutual recognition of autonomy. Of course, this certainly happens already in many cases, quietly and unacknowledged by the manuals. What would then arise in the conversation would then provide a direction for the learning that followed; it would enter and leave a continuous flow of communication. It might, indeed almost certainly would, involve the introduction of other supports of expression, materials, actions, role-playing exercises, evidence and testimony, body language, tunes and songs half-remembered, the visual references (photographs, paintings, faces in the street) that enrich and complete our own understandings. These then would become the 'texts' of the language learning process. And they are not merely 'realia' – a vague notion that suggests condiments and decoration, flavouring ingredients to create a sense of place or, more probably, of 'otherness' ('like background').

They continue:

Why should advertisements, songs, magazine articles, recipes, medical advice, radio programmes, theatrical performances not act as texts in this sense? After all, they are 'meaningful' language acts.³⁵

Questioning the privileging of literature in the study of languages, Phipps and Gonzalez construe language learning instead as an encounter, and call explicitly for the development of ethnographic approaches within the discipline.³⁶ Maybe some

³³ Phipps and Gonzalez, p. 27.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 22

³⁵ Ibid., p. 97.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 124.

might try to contend that the reason this call went largely unanswered is because the book *appears* to offer little practical explanation of how to engage with ethnography *in traditional academic reporting terms*. I would stress this point – actually, the authors include several reflections on instances of innovative practice in language learning and teaching but perhaps, in distinguishing these in italicized font and indicating them as more personal musings, sometimes without explanation or further analysis, they have been skipped by some hurried readers. But an earlier publication, Celia Roberts et al.'s *Language Learners as Ethnographers*, referenced by Phipps and Gonzalez as an example of an exciting development in Modern Languages in the UK,³⁷ suggests to me that the absence of ethnography in Modern Languages degrees in is due at best to a lack of interest, and at worst to active resistance to alternative ways of studying and writing about language and culture, rather than a lack of guidance or critical references.

Language Learners as Ethnographers reports on a research project in which Modern Languages staff collaborated with anthropologists at Thames Valley University in the 1990s in order to explore some of the practical consequences of theories of intercultural communication that were starting to gain wider currency at the time. Targeting primarily language lecturers and teachers, the first half of the book theoretically explores the relationship between language and ethnography before, in the second half, offering examples from ethnographic research undertaken by students participating in the Ealing Ethnography Project. With a focus on the development of a programme of study which would equip students to benefit from a period abroad as ethnographers, Roberts et al.'s report makes for an inspiring and convincing read, not least for its feasible applicability in the context of undergraduate Modern Languages departments.

The authors' suggestion that 'learners are not simply, and not centrally, acquiring skills' but rather undertaking 'an engagement with a new social identity which is integral with the acquisition of methods and concepts for reflection and analysis' is grounded in the findings of the application of the Ealing Ethnography Project.³⁸

³⁷ Roberts et al., cf. Phipps and Gonzalez, p. 124.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 238.

Participant Chris, eight years after taking part in the project, made links between language learning skills and interpreting otherness, and cited its value as follows:

It had never occurred to me before the project to look at things from other people's point of view. That's one thing I overcame through this ethnography project, not just to use your own vision, your own terms to describe things as a first resort. It was a huge step not only to see and speak to people but communicate with them in their own terms which was an excellent thing and one of the long-lasting effects.³⁹

The second half of the book offers a critical review of each stage of the ethnography course, analysing the value of tasks set, such as the writing of an ethnographic research report of 7000 words in the target language,⁴⁰ and providing guidance for their application. On the one hand, from my perspective, their summary is inspiring:

The conclusion that language teaching should aim to develop in learners an intercultural competence, rather than an imitation of a native speaker competence, is being increasingly accepted, for example in the 'Common European Framework of Reference' of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 1998). What we hope to have demonstrated in this book is how, in one set of circumstances, language learners can become intercultural speakers through ethnographic practice.⁴¹

On the other, the fact that Roberts et al. were writing over fifteen years ago, and ethnography still seems to be regarded with suspicion within Modern Languages, does not bode well. If we go back to our question regarding what a degree in Modern Languages should offer and how it can do so, it is probably clear by now that the thesis will support the type of approach advocated by Phipps and Gonzalez and Roberts et al. Over the following pages, I will argue, by way of demonstration, that the study of language and culture is about offering the learner a process which can promote critical reflection upon the contemporary world and their own place within it.

³⁹ Roberts et al., pp. 244 - 245.

⁴⁰ Ibid., see pp. 115-119 for a description of the course outline and p. 194 for reflections on the report.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 229.

In no small part, as Anderson indicates, this means engaging with the reality that one of the most productive consequences of the effective study of a foreign language is to reveal the foreignness of the language(s) and culture(s) that we previously uncritically identified as our own – a point that echoes Marianne Grey’s description of a pedagogical duty of teachers of English to encourage their students to be ‘ethnographers of difference’, exploring their own boundaries of comprehending diversity.⁴² But in referring to the work of Phipps and Gonzalez and Roberts et al., I want to highlight that the arguments I make are not, in themselves, new ones, which begs another question, that of why these approaches have *not* been taken up more systematically.

In part, I think it may be a question of audience. Both texts target primarily teachers or well-established scholars. Roberts et al. do suggest that postgraduate students may find the book illuminating, but they specify ‘students of anthropology’.⁴³ I want instead to write about ethnographic approaches in a way that will invite debate, and I hope, optimistically, grant them validity or at least more visibility amongst other Modern Languages postgraduates, especially early career scholars. Given that the majority of my postgraduate colleagues are also engaged in some form of undergraduate language teaching, I was excited to see that they propose ‘language lecturers as ethnographers’, highlighting that language tutors working within Modern Languages are best placed to make ethnographic approaches accessible to students.⁴⁴ At the same time, though, I recognize that the responsibility of designing, implementing and assessing the type of course they experiment with – a separate module – is an unfair and unrealistic demand on contracted, hourly-paid students who are hardly likely to be able to guarantee the longer-term commitment such initiatives require. This type of systematic approach needs to come from higher up. What does seem feasible, though, and productive both for postgraduate tutors and for their students, is to try to bring an ethnographic self-reflexivity and into the language learning classroom itself. This is where I will concentrate a large part of my energies in the final part of the thesis, investigating how collaborative translation can introduce this kind of perspective.

⁴² Marianne Grey, ‘Ethnographers of difference in a critical EAP community-becoming’, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 8 (2009), 121-33.

⁴³ Roberts et al., p. 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Another issue, I think, is application. As I have said, Phipps and Gonzalez indicate throughout their volume, in the form of reflective passages, how to promote more reflexive, culturally- and socially-engaged conception of the work of languages, but I suspect a more applied approach is required to convince the sceptics. Similarly, the student projects listed at end of Roberts et al.'s text provide a stimulating hint of the work that can be done, but this is presented from a teaching perspective, rather than that of the researcher. Two of the co-authors offer considerations of the ethnography projects they undertook in preparation for teaching the ethnography course,⁴⁵ and though again, this is with the view to highlight to the reader the value of ethnographic experience for use in teaching rather than in research, I was struck by Barro and Jordan's self-evaluation that 'what was on the page seemed raw and unsophisticated'.⁴⁶ As a postgraduate researcher, I would have found it incredibly helpful to have seen the write-ups of their own research; to understand just what they mean by 'raw', to have an example of what might be possible, even to dispute its rawness and recognise its value.

Taking these two issues into account, the following three chapters of the thesis will essentially be case-studies, arguing for recognition of ethnography through its application. The fourth chapter, 'Words', is a little different; it moves from an ethnographic case-study of the use of language before bringing the insights raised back into the context of language learning. Throughout the chapters, I will employ a critical framework that draws on the work of largely ethnographic theorists of the significance of the everyday, of the interplay between class, value and subjectivity, and of the dynamics of individual and collective meaning-making (specifically Michel de Certeau and Beverley Skeggs). Via an ethnographic approach to 'unexpected' sites that are usually considered beyond the remit of Modern Language study, I will critically interpret some of the meanings of 'Italy' and 'Italian culture' in the UK and in relation to transnational mobility with the aim of investigating the value of material culture and ethnography in contemporary Modern Languages research and teaching.

This is quite a big claim, so to avoid disappointing the reader I will now spend some time going through the texts that have already undertaken relevant inquiries in related fields and explaining precisely what I hope to contribute.

⁴⁵ Roberts et al., pp. 101 - 107.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

i. What the thesis will not do, by way of literature review

I am writing from within Italian Studies for scholars of Italian culture and, more broadly, Modern Languages as someone who is experimenting with ethnography. I offer a series of practical examples from Italian contexts of the enabling ways in which ethnographic methods and the study of material artefacts can enhance the engagement of Modern Languages with mobility, transnationalism and the related questions of identity, culture and society. This is not, therefore an all-purpose guide to conducting ethnographic study. As Fiona Copland and Angela Creese point out, 'providing generalised answers to sets of contextualised problems does not sit easily with the epistemological orientation of ethnography'.⁴⁷ For those looking for an introduction to the methods, ethics, and practicalities of conducting ethnographies with a focus on language and the linguistic, there already a dynamic body of scholarship which offers guidance through detailed reflective reports of ethnographic research: Jan Blommaert and Dong Jie's short book, *Ethnographic Fieldwork: A Beginner's Guide* is, as the title suggests, is probably the best place to start for the student like me wholly new to this type of research.⁴⁸ For the reader who is looking for a more wide-ranging practical exploration of the challenges and opportunities of ethnography in different forms, in addition to aforementioned texts by Roberts et al., Dotker and Hills De Zárte, and Pink, Pink's more recent *Doing Sensory Ethnography*,⁴⁹ and Copland and Creese's edited collection *Linguistic Ethnography: Collecting, Analysing and Presenting data*,⁵⁰ provide an invaluable and grounded insight from a variety of perspectives. The working papers of the 'Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities' ('TLANG') also offer an inspiring range of rigorous critical insight on various stages of ethnographic research, some of which I will be referring to subsequently.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Fiona Copland and Angela Creese, *Linguistic Ethnography: Collecting, Analysing and Presenting Data* (London: SAGE, 2015), p. 9.

⁴⁸ Jan Blommaert and Dong Jie, *Ethnographic Fieldwork: A Beginner's Guide* (Bristol, Buffalo and Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2010).

⁴⁹ Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (London: Sage, 2009).

⁵⁰ Copland and Creese, 2015.

⁵¹ *Working Papers in Translanguaging and Translation*, online:

<<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/publications/index.aspx>> [accessed 21 June 2017].

I will not offer a comprehensive history of migration from Italy to England. Fortunately, this formidable task has already been undertaken by what must be the primary reference for any scholar of Italian migration to the UK, Terri Colpi's *The Italian Factor: The Italian Community in Great Britain*.⁵² Colpi has worked statistical data into a captivating portrait of a century of Italian migration to the UK; her impressive scope sweeps from the macro-dynamics of early chain migration to glimpses of micro-practices such as the contemporary maintenance of the tradition of giving *bomboniere* at wedding receptions.⁵³ Identifying as a third-generation Italian Scot, Colpi explicitly positions herself *within* the community she describes; as she explains, she is concerned with those like herself who 'have an Italian way of life, are linked with Italy and who feel at least partly Italian. The *Italian Factor* takes, therefore, an insider's view'.⁵⁴ The text reports upon an extensive range of historical processes, institutions, social structures, familial and community practices which have animated and continue to sustain 'the Italian Community' in Britain. Colpi proposes that it is difficult to overstate the significance of the catering link for Italians of London,⁵⁵ an argument borne out by the exponential growth of Italian catering business in the capital in the twenty-five years since Colpi's book was first published, and one of the reasons I will centre my inquiry on the hospitality industry and food as material culture (a point I will return to shortly). The project is also indebted to the sketch Colpi offers of the personal stories within the broader refrains which compose this landscape, as exemplified in the following passage:

In sum, we can appreciate the longing to return to Italy; women particularly have had hard lives because of their emigration. They remember Italy as the land of their childhood, their parents, sun and happiness. Of course they see it with rose-tinted glasses and forget the reasons that forced them to leave. But Italy has changed and, as we know, has outstripped Britain in economic growth (*il sorpasso*). First-generation Italians with a *nostalgia* for Italy see a way of life there today very much preferable to the one they lead in England when they make their return visits in the summer. First-generation women of the southern Italian communities are

⁵² Terri Colpi, *The Italian Factor: The Italian Community in Great Britain* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 1991).

⁵³ Colpi, p. 212.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

the least contented perhaps of all the Italians in Britain today. They are the living embodiment of the difficulty and sadness of emigration.⁵⁶

The demographic of migration has altered significantly from the time of writing, and the contemporary reader will not recognise the circumstances of *il sorpasso* described above (similarly, what Colpi, writing in the early 1990s, calls the ‘new community’ - those Italians arriving between the end of World War Two and the 1970s from predominately rural areas – is confusingly what Giuseppe Scotto, writing in 2015, refers to as the ‘old community’ to distinguish from more recent mobility patterns).⁵⁷ The pertinence of the theme of nostalgia, though, remains as relevant as ever. I was interested in Colpi’s identification of this theme – she places the word in italics and, in her glossary of Italian terms, Colpi also takes care to define this *nostalgia* as both ‘nostalgia’ in the more conventional English sense and ‘homesickness’.⁵⁸ I also want to build on the allusions, throughout her account, to a sense of Italian identity that is crafted in quotidian acts (for example, her suggestion that ‘the best way to make *caffelatte* in the morning is with long-life milk’).⁵⁹ The thesis departs from these interests, beginning by comparing the relationship between nostalgia and belonging enacted by the physical space of a café and personal culinary memoirs. With this specific portrait in mind, it will also pay attention to understandings of Southern Italy and the role assigned to women in these nostalgic re-creations.

Aside from *The Italian Factor*, scholarly attention to Italian migration to Britain, and specifically to London, Scotland, and Wales, has increased steadily since the publication of Lucio Sponza’s *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-century Britain: Realities and Images* in the late eighties,⁶⁰ with the circumstances of British-Italians during World War Two and in its aftermath representing a focal site. I will not deal with this experience, nor with its specific legacy in terms of broader cultural memorialization, which has been the subject of recent and highly sensitive critical

⁵⁶ Colpi, pp. 217-18.

⁵⁷ Giuseppe Scotto, ‘From “emigrants” to “Italians”: what is new in Italian migration to London?’, *Modern Italy*, 20.2 (2015), 155-65.

⁵⁸ Colpi, p. 267.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁶⁰ Lucio Sponza, *Italian Immigrants in Nineteenth-century Britain: Realities and Images* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 1988).

investigation with Wendy Ugolini's 2011 book, *Experiencing the War as the 'Enemy Other': Italian-Scottish Experience in World War Two* and Elizabeth Wren-Owens's writings on the memory of fascism in the Scottish and Welsh contexts.⁶¹ What I am interested in is what Wren-Owens calls 'the commodification of ethnicity', and specifically her question whether a delayed emergence of Italian-Welsh narrative at the start of the twenty-first century might be more usefully read transnationally, in terms of a subaltern Celtic identity.⁶² The notion of subalterity is something I will pay close attention to, particularly in relation to individual life narratives. I am also interested in the way Wren-Owens concludes her interpretation of recent examples of Italian Welsh narrative texts by contrasting the 'aura of history' displayed in one Italian café in Wales with a conscious rejection of past-ness in another,⁶³ and suggesting that 'the commodification of Italian Welsh ethnicity and history is the default setting, and that any other past requires a deliberate choice'.⁶⁴ She highlights both the specificity of this commodification process, which embeds Italians in the Welsh community and roots ethnicity in class debates, and a convergence with 'a more global use of Italy as a simulacrum', a montage of a simpler, slower time.⁶⁵ I think Wren-Owens's piece can thus be taken as an example of how an ethnographic sensitivity is already present within Modern Languages. The thesis will develop this through an interwoven reading of sites, texts, and personal narratives, and I will also consider the significance of a 'subaltern' classed ethnicity like that discussed by Wren-Owens in relation to how Italy is visually represented in London and remembered personal narratives.

This is not however, as stated previously, an ethnography of Italians in London or of Anglo-Italian experience. Readers looking for this type of approach are best directed towards Margherita Sprio's *Migrant Memories: Cultural History, Cinema and the*

⁶¹ Wendy Ugolini, *Experiencing the War as the 'Enemy Other': Italian-Scottish Experience in World War Two* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Elizabeth Wren-Owens, 'The delayed emergence of Italian-Welsh narrative, or class and the commodification of ethnicity', *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture*, 3.11 (2012), 119-34, and 'Remembering fascism: Polyphony and its absence in contemporary Italian-Scottish and Italian-Welsh narrative', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 15.1 (2015), 73-90.

⁶² Wren-Owens, 'The delayed emergence of Italian Welsh narratives, or class and the commodification of ethnicity'.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130, cf. Stephania Malia Hom, 'Italy without borders: Simulacra, tourism, suburbia and the new grand tour', *Italian Studies*, 65. 3 (2010), 367-97.

Italian Post-War Diaspora in Britain, a compelling ethnography which interweaves participant interviews with critical analysis of films as cultural objects to highlight the significance of cinema in mediating understandings of Italian migration to Britain in the 1950s, and the cultural legacy of this process for subsequent generations,⁶⁶ and Anne-Marie Fortier's *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*.⁶⁷ Balancing an ethnographic investigation conducted through two London Italian organizations, St. Peter's Italian Church and the Centro Scalabrini with a consideration of the historical and political narratives of Italian migration to Britain, Fortier's book examines the kind of community imagined and the elements which 'gel together the disparate population of Italian immigrants'.⁶⁸ Sprio's and Fortier's inquiries into identity, memory and belonging in relation to Italian migration balance Colpi's broader historical narrative with their examination of more personal identity processes, and both of these texts have significantly informed my investigation. I felt on occasion that I was re-tracing their steps, watching the same Church service that Fortier describes as 'a re-run of part of my identity *in the making*',⁶⁹ sharing the same fascination with the numinous images of Neapolitan cards. I will spend a little time here distinguishing my perspective from their respective viewpoints and highlighting the departure points their texts have signalled to me.

Sprio's text is valuable not least for its clarity. The author's self-reflexivity, as the daughter of first-generation Italian migrants, and her comprehensive review of literature on Italian migration – including Sponza's text, previous volumes by Donna Gabaccia (not the one I discuss below), and a history of Italian Studies within the UK - together with her recuperation of Danilo Dolci's approach to oral narrative, make for a stimulating and insightful critical account.⁷⁰ *Migrant Memories* opens up scholarship to the multiplicity of mundane experiences and identifications of 'being Italian' and the ways this consciousness and memory have been mediated through popular culture (she centres on the films of Frank Capra, Anthony Minghella, and Raffaello Matarazzo). In a sense, one of the objectives of this thesis is to complement Sprio's inquiry; by using food as material culture to profile Italian migration, I want to

⁶⁶ Margherita Sprio, *Migrant Memories: Cultural History, Cinema and the Italian Post-War Diaspora in Britain* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013).

⁶⁷ Anne-Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (New York; Oxford: Berg, 2000).

⁶⁸ Fortier, p. 38.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133; author's emphasis.

⁷⁰ Sprio, pp. 30-33, cf. Danilo Dolci, *Sicilian Lives* (London: Writers and Readers, 1981).

offer a critical perspective on what is arguably the most visible trope of Italian mobility. To this end, Sprio's contrast of the 'celebratory nature' of images of Italian-American culture with the experience of British-Italians provides a point of departure:

The British-Italian experience is quite unlike the experience of the Italian-American, and also unlike the recent wave of middle-class, educated migrant Italians who have chosen to come to Britain during the last two decades [...]. The romanticism and nostalgia prevalent in the mediated construction which is understood to be Italian-American is noticeably absent when attempting to draw a parallel between this mediation and that of the British-Italian. Apart from the few mediated stereotypes perpetuated in the contemporary British media, the immigrant Italian presence in Britain still remains largely invisible.⁷¹

Precisely because of the current desirability of authentic Italian culinary culture and the high visibility of its associated 'mediated stereotypes' (celebrity chefs like Gino D'Acampo and Antonio Carluccio) that Sprio dismisses, I have chosen food as a means to profile expressions of Italian transnational mobility. The food industry is the singularly most visible and accessible site of Italian culture in the UK. It is also a site which, as we shall see, is charged with a particular 'romanticism and nostalgia' that Sprio suggests is largely absent in Britain - something the thesis will contest via its attention to the homeliness and sociality Italy seems to represent - rendering it a particularly useful way to think not just beyond, but critically *through* national stereotypes. But we will come back to all of this presently. Let me first make clear what the thesis will not do, by way of continuing the review of existing literature.

Fortier's book, as the title indicates, centres instead on the notion of belonging. From the outset, the author implicitly problematizes the idea of an Italian community by placing the word in inverted commas, 'these questions surround my scrutiny of textual practices that substantiate the existence of an Italian "community" in Britain'; 'by identifying the common threads running through these stories of "community"', I seek to unpack the organizing principles of these narratives',⁷² alluding to the inadequacy of this term for describing the heterogeneous category of Italians in

⁷¹ Sprio, pp. 18-19.

⁷² Fortier, p. 38.

present-day London. As she goes on to explain, the Italian 'community' operates 'behind closed doors', in spaces such as the Centro Scalabrini:

Life at the Centro takes places exclusively inside, invisible to the neighbouring Brixton residents, available only to a handful of people connected to each other through a close 'community' network. At first, this produced for me a sense that the place, the building was wrapped in an 'invisible pulsing membrane' (Myerhoff 1979: 5) that separates it from the immediate surroundings.

But this is indeed a 'pulsing' place. A place that vibrates, lives and is lived in ways that are continually redefined. Precisely because one crosses the building threshold to 'commune' with others, and to do so as Italians, the Centro is stasis and process at once.⁷³

Through her participation in this invisible Italian 'community', Fortier examines the 'homing desire' of Italians living in a 'non-Italian, non-Catholic world', citing the remembrance of migration and the re-enactment of traditions expressed by these sites as expressions of a 'desire which is connected to the creation of a sense of place, a structure of feeling that is local in its materialization, while its symbolic reach is multilocal'.⁷⁴ Fortier ultimately recognises the 'home' articulated by these institutional projects as the creation of a sense of place, and the thesis will scrutinize this trope within the visible space of Italian food culture. It will highlight the continuity between the articulations of home and belonging that Fortier finds in the 'marginal' operations of the Centro Scalabrini and St. Peter's Italian Church with the values projected onto more public spaces of encounter that are recognised as 'Italian'. By examining the wider social purchase of these sites as well as their function within individual life courses, I will offer a new critical perspective on the romantic 'bucolic origins' that Fortier finds writers have consistently and unproblematically associated with the Italian presence in Britain.⁷⁵

⁷³ Fortier, p. 106.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 163.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 44.

Crucially, my view diverges from Fortier's on the question of language. Because Fortier focuses on these two groups, I would argue that the potential of language as a site of mediation and belonging tends to be obscured by *Migrant Belongings*. For example, Fortier explains how she could physically 'pass as Italian', commenting:

Even when I apologized for my poor knowledge of the Italian language, this was usually shrugged off by comparing me to the English-born children of immigrants: 'Bah! Just like my daughter', I was told', indicating there is no uniform way of 'acting' that would express 'Italian-ness'.⁷⁶

For Fortier as a white Catholic female, as with the English-born children of immigrants she is compared to, speaking Italian can be an optional extra; for other, particularly non-white and non-Catholic bodies, speaking Italian is often the only way of being recognized as Italian. It is precisely because I agree with Fortier's suggestion that 'Italian-ness' cannot be defined, expressed or embodied in any general way that I want to draw attention to language as one of the elements which affords, or precludes, a sense of group belonging and mediates a sense of self, and the surprising ways in which it may do so. Chapter V, 'Words' will centre on this issue from a research and teaching point of view.

Both *Migrant Belongings* and *Migrant Memories* offer valuable reflections on the position of the respective authors as ethnographic researchers in this context of 'invisible' migration. Fortier avers that 'participant observation should not be read in terms of the "I was there" version of credentialism that allows researchers to claim some form of "insider" knowledge',⁷⁷ an assertion born out practically with Sprio's evaluation of some of Fortier's findings in *Migrant Memories*. For example, whereas Fortier, a Québécois researcher with a Catholic background, stresses the importance of the Catholic Church in creating and maintaining a sense of community, Sprio, as the daughter of first-generation Italian migrants, suggests that such a vision 'leaves little room for those of Italian origin and indeed the children of its very parishioners that do not tend to subscribe to the religious order'.⁷⁸ Taken together, these accounts make it obvious that interviews are always a dialogic, context-specific process in

⁷⁶ Fortier, p. 7; author's emphases.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁸ Sprio, p. 67.

which what is said depends on how the interviewer is perceived by the interviewee. This takes us back to my discussion of the idea of representation. It is noteworthy that Sprio critiques Fortier on account of representation, contending that ‘the events she [Fortier] attends within particular Italian communities are both representative and not representative at the same time’.⁷⁹ To a certain extent, representation is the implicit concern of Colpi’s, Fortier’s and Sprio’s respective texts, be it in the form of a general representation of Italian migration to Britain as a historical narrative (Colpi), by considering experiences and/or modes of community expression and maintenance as representative (Fortier), or by writing against ‘the invisibility of the Italian immigrant experience to Britain on any representational level’ (Sprio).⁸⁰ Because my project arises out of a concern to emphasize Modern Languages as a mode of critical inquiry, my interest is not in the representative, the ‘typical case’ (again, if one can even be said to exist). I want to focus instead on specific instances which may or may not be very typical at all, but, within the precise circumstances which produce them, offer what Pennycook calls ‘critical moments’; revelatory examples that invite us to re-think the expected and query the normative position.

Despite her focus on how individual and collective memory of the ‘Italian diaspora’ in Britain has been shaped by film media, Sprio’s account is very sensitive to the way language may inform and reflect experience. Indeed, one of the criticisms she levels at Azadeh Medaglia’s report, a text we will come to presently, is that the author does not make evident how, by whom, and *in what language* interviews were conducted.⁸¹ Sprio acknowledges the significance of language in several specific environments, such as how English language skills are a ‘marker of assimilation’, and the role of Italian language classes in community maintenance (rather than formation, as Fortier suggests).⁸² In her discussion of participant interview language choice, she highlights the importance of language from a methodological perspective, but I am most interested in the potential research paths she alludes to in passing; for example, when she notes ‘additionally, generic English expressions might be included with the regional Italian spoken, although the interviewee would often cite herself or himself

⁷⁹ Sprio, p. 55.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.18-19.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸² Ibid., p. 63

as a non-English speaker',⁸³ and most provocatively, in the nod to language in her concluding remarks, drawing on a participant's comment:

Fluency of language is often the marker through which cultural identity is negotiated, and lack of entry into language through non-fluency is still a way to differentiate between assumed 'true' assimilation and a more partial one: *'They treat me like I'm stupid because I don't speak [English] very well, even though I've been here such a long time. But I'm used to it and to them they think this is a new experience, but what they forget is that I have had a lifetime of being treated like this. I don't care since often I am laughing at them rather than the other way around.'*⁸⁴

The assertion that *not* understanding or speaking English here is as much, if not *more*, of a source of humour for the linguistically 'deprived' participant as it is for the English speaker – 'often I am laughing at them rather than the other way around' – is a stimulating one, implying that the lack of an ability to speak, or a lack of understanding, can also be a creatively affirming experience. Responding to this inviting opening, one key theme of the thesis will be the possibilities of language itself as a site through which the inscription of value and meaning can be contested.

Through its attention to value and meaning, class will be a key concern of the thesis, but this is not an investigation of how class shapes the experience of migration. I am happy that class and ethnicity as mediating factors of West-EU migration are receiving increasing attention, something which has previously been veiled by an academic focus on professional, well-established West-EU migration;⁸⁵ my only objection to *Migrant Memories* was regarding Sprio's suggestion that it is 'impossible' to reconcile the few points of connection between British-Italian experience and the recent wave of middle-class, educated migrant Italians who have chosen to come to Britain during the last two decades.⁸⁶ This is a common claim which overlooks the many attitudes

⁸³ Sprio, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 277, citing participant 'A', 1st generation female, b. Sicily, emigrated to Britain in 1959.

⁸⁵ Simone Varriale, 'EU Migrants: Differences, Inequalities and Distinctions', *The Sociological Review*, 1 June 2017, online: <<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/eu-migrants-differences-inequalities-and-distinctions-1.html>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

⁸⁶ Sprio, pp. 18-19.

and behaviours that the groups share,⁸⁷ and obscures the heterogeneity within these groups.⁸⁸ For those interested in sociological perspectives on the relationship between class and Italian migration, Giuseppe Scotto's short comparative report on the 'old' and 'new' Italian communities in London brings the issue of opportunity to the fore,⁸⁹ and Simone Varriale's current project, 'Transnationalising Class' (2016-2019), promises to shed new light on how age, gender, and ethnicity and economic, cultural and social capital effects migration from Italy to the UK.⁹⁰ Though Varriale can at this stage only report upon early findings, I am interested to hear how the disparate experiences of his Italian participants are framed as 'culture' rather than discussed in terms of inequality:

What they tend to discuss are distinctions of individual behaviour and 'culture'. Especially among professionals and graduates, there is a feeling that since the economic crisis, 'too many Italians' have moved to the UK. These 'other' Italians are usually associated with the catering sector. 'Italian waiters' are imagined as lacking qualifications and a 'rational plan' for moving abroad, or as people who are 'vulgar' and 'noisy'. Some respondents even associate waiters with 'Southerners', thus reproducing the long-standing idea of Southern Italians as culturally backwards. These distinctions, thus, disguise systemic inequalities of region, education and background into individual differences of character and morality. They also convey the image of a coherent social group – Italian waiters – which doesn't really exist, as people from different regions, and with different qualifications and plans for their future, can end up, temporarily or permanently, in the catering sector. These intersections between race, ethnicity and class suggest that we should not mistake a journalistic and political category – EU migrants – for a sociologically meaningful one.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Scotto, 153-65 (p. 162).

⁸⁸ Varriale, <<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/eu-migrants-differences-inequalities-and-distinctions-1.html>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

⁸⁹ Scotto, 153-65.

⁹⁰ *Transnationalising class: trajectories, resources and experiences of post-crisis Italian migrants* project description available online:

<<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/syrkaf/transnationalisingclass/>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

⁹¹ Varriale, <<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/eu-migrants-differences-inequalities-and-distinctions-1.html>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

Varriale also reveals the 'powerful sense of entitlement' that positive images of Italy circulating in the UK can confer upon Italian migrants, citing specifically the association of Italy with exoticism and pleasure; the 'artistic heritage of Italian cities, desirable "authentic" food', as well as, of course, holidays.⁹² I hope therefore that this thesis might perhaps eventually dialogue with Varriale's more sociological investigation through my focus on the values associated with Italy in England and investigation of the continuity of these visions with ideas that circulate within Italy of the Italian South.

Its purpose is not, however, to investigate how national identity is wrought transnationally. I would point the reader interested in this form of inquiry to two other texts which have duly exercised an influence on my perspective. Firstly, Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel's edited volume, *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*,⁹³ a collection of essays which indicates the variety of ways Italian and English national identity have mutually shaped one another - very literally, in the case of Alison Yarrington's contribution, 'Made in Italy': Sculpture and the Staging of National Identities at the International Exhibition of 1862'.⁹⁴ Spanning the 'one-way' traffic of both people and cultural exports from Early Modern Italy to England (the physical movement of Protestant refugees, artisans, musicians, painters, or bankers, was echoed in the flow of cultural ideas such as the advent of the new science, aesthetic genres such as the sonnet, and the translation of Italian texts by Petrarch, Tasso, and Machiavelli amongst others),⁹⁵ to contemporary sporting events, rock concerts, and cuisine, the volume indicates how a sense of being Italian or English (or British) is 'staged both within each culture and, more importantly, in joint performances of difference across cultural borders'.⁹⁶ What I have taken from this book is a valuable attention to the performative aspect of the other beyond a colonial/postcolonial context, that is, to the intercultural transactions

⁹² Varriale, <<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/eu-migrants-differences-inequalities-and-distinctions-1.html>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

⁹³ *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. by Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008).

⁹⁴ Alison Yarrington, 'Made in Italy': Sculpture and the Staging of National Identities at the International Exhibition of 1862', in *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions* ed. by Pfister and Hertel, pp. 75-99.

⁹⁵ Manfred Pfister, 'Introduction: Performing National Identity', *Performing National Identity* ed. by Pfister and Hertel, pp. 9-28 (pp. 16-17).

⁹⁶ Pfister, p. 9.

occurring *within* Europe and the ways in which the other 'serves as a contrastive foil or as a projection screen for the anxieties or the desires of the self', in popular culture and everyday contexts.⁹⁷ Specifically, I was engaged by the general premise of

how performing one's cultural identity is always a performance *against* the backdrop of the other performing culture or even *for* it; how our performances of national identity react and respond to expectations and role scenarios projected by the other culture; how we are always both performers and spectators, performers aware of an audience and an audience aware of performances, at one and the same time.⁹⁸

I find the notion of 'performing' cultural identity a very useful one, and in Chapter IV I expand on Pfister and Hertel's premise by pondering more closely this choice of terminology and why it might be useful, in the context of transnational mobility, to think of certain behaviour in terms of performance. The promise to examine the discursive construction of national identity 'beyond texts',⁹⁹ similarly appealing, is maintained by the diverse range of sites analysed in the 'two-way traffic of images and projections', from newspaper articles to the female body.¹⁰⁰ I appreciated how this goal is reflected even by the paratext; the volume's cover, which features David Hockney's 'Flight into Italy – Swiss Landscape' (1961), is cited as a visual testimony to England's investment in Italy as the exotic other, offering in Hockney's case the promise of escape from a 'drab, homophobic middle-class England and a yet far from swinging London'.¹⁰¹ Of particular note is the final essay in the volume, Gisela Ecker's analysis of the intercultural fantasies represented by the dish *zuppa inglese* and *Guardian* food editor Matthew Fort's novel, *Eating Up Italy: Voyages on a Vespa* (London: Fourth Estate, 2004). Clearly, Ecker's focus on food as one of the channels through which a sense of being English or Italian is enacted, and her attention to the quest for the 'genuine' or the 'authentic' is very pertinent to this inquiry.¹⁰² My

⁹⁷ Pfister, p. 10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Gundle, 'The "Bella Italiana" and the "English Rose": Reflections on Two National Typologies of Feminine Beauty', in *Performing National Identity*, ed. by Pfister and Hertel, pp. 137-55.

¹⁰¹ Pfister, p. 18.

¹⁰² Gisela Ecker, 'Zuppa Inglese and Eating up Italy: Intercultural Feasts and Fantasies', in *Performing National Identity*, ed. by Pfister and Hertel, pp. 307-22.

ethnographic approach will develop the commitment of these authors to look beyond literature or canonized culture to examine the “‘Italies” made in and for England’ by considering personal narratives and the ways in which individuals consciously negotiate a sense of self and place in everyday practice.¹⁰³

The second text I have found particularly helpful in terms of a transnational outlook is Donna Gabaccia and Loretta Baldassar’s edited volume, *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World*.¹⁰⁴ For me, this is, like Sprio’s text, an inspiring example of the criticality achieved by combining narratives of personal memory and theoretical scrutiny. As a whole, these essays explore the creation and maintenance of ideas of national belonging and the nation-state through personal practice, upholding that ‘one of the best places to explore the emergence of the national, and the ways in which nation-states seek to embrace the intersection of public and private practices and personae, is in the lives of individual men and women’.¹⁰⁵ This is, as I say, not precisely my goal, but I would like to develop their attention to the interrelation of a sense of self with local identity and family heritage, as well as the stimulating use of ethnographic approaches in several of the essays. Specifically, Pavla Miller’s use of oral narratives in the intimate context of fertility decisions to scrutinise ideas of ‘Italian’ motherhood and marriage,¹⁰⁶ Carla De Tona’s attention to motherhood as one of the key sites of ‘identity building’ in the context of Italian migrant women in Ireland,¹⁰⁷ and Loretta Baldassar’s exploration of caregiving as point of Italian identification for subsequent generations of migrant families in Australia,¹⁰⁸ all demonstrate the value of oral narratives of personal and everyday experience. Given the scope of the volume, it is understandable, albeit unfortunate, that only one essay pays attention to an English case. This is in a historical context (a

¹⁰³ Pfister, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World*, ed. by Loretta Baldassar and Donna R. Gabaccia (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁵ Loretta Baldassar and Donna R. Gabaccia, ‘Home, Family and the Italian Nation in a Mobile World. The Domestic and the National among Italy’s Migrants’, in *Intimacy and Italian Migration*, ed. by Baldassar and Gabaccia, pp. 1-22 (p. 6).

¹⁰⁶ Pavla Miller, ‘Calculating Babies: Changing Accounts of Fertility Decisions among Italians in Melbourne, Australia’, in *Intimacy and Italian Migration*, ed. by Baldassar and Gabaccia, pp. 85-100.

¹⁰⁷ Carla De Tona, ‘Mothering Contradictory Diasporas: Negotiation of traditional motherhood roles among Italian migrant women in Ireland’, in *Intimacy and Italian Migration*, ed. by Baldassar and Gabaccia, pp. 101-12

¹⁰⁸ Loretta Baldassar, ‘Obligation to People and Place: The National in Cultures of Caregiving’, in *Intimacy and Italian Migration*, ed. by Baldassar and Gabaccia, pp. 171-88.

study of nationalism ‘at home’, in the marriage of Giordina Craufurd and Aurelio Saffi),¹⁰⁹ and so one of the things this thesis will do is to take Gabaccia and Baldassar’s identification of the intersection of nationality, subjectivity, local identity, family heritage, and belonging as a methodological point of departure to investigate some of the values projected onto Italy in the contemporary English context and the transnational circulation of these ideas.

There are two further texts about Italian migration to London that I ought to mention before concluding this section. In a sense opposite ends of a spectrum, one being a wilfully subjective overview of the London of Italian migrants from the Victorian period to the present day, the other a sociological investigation of patriarchal structures, they have influenced the objectives and the presentation of the thesis in different ways.

Alessandro Forte’s *La Londra Degli Italiani. Dai penny ice alla City: due secoli di emigrazione* is a brief history of Italian migration to London with view to portray some of the whys and wherefores of the most recent wave of migration. ‘In parte indagine storico-sociale, in parte diario di viaggio e guida alternativa alle strade e ai quartieri di Londra’, (‘Part socio-historical investigation, part diary and alternative guide to London’s streets’),¹¹⁰ the author, an investment banker who moved from Italy to London in 2008 – not a relation to the founders of the Forte hotel group – combines his own experience with oral interviews and historical accounts to provide a snapshot of some of the facets of London experienced by Italians. In many ways, Forte’s text can be considered one of a growing number of textual and intermedial representations of the experience of moving Italy to London; narratives fashioning the challenges of a new life in a metropolis, and frustration at the socio-economic conditions within Italy which prompted a decision to leave, into a collective story.¹¹¹ Accordingly, his conclusion is unashamedly sentimental: ‘Ripenso infine a tutte le persone incontrate per la stesura del libro, ai loro racconti, ai volti carichi di ottimismo

¹⁰⁹ Ros Pesman, ‘The Marriage of Giordina Craufurd and Aurelio Saffi: Mazzinian Nationalism and the Italian Home’, in *Intimacy and Italian Migration*, ed. by Baldassar and Gabaccia, pp. 25-36.

¹¹⁰ Forte, p. 18.

¹¹¹ See for example, Enrico Franceschini, *Londra Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 2016); the documentary *INFLUX*, dir. by Luca Vullo (EM in collaboration with Ondemotive, 2016); the web platform ‘Italian Kingdom’: <<http://italiankingdom.com>>, and publication *Italian Kingdom* (Hampshire: Ashford Colour Press, 2016).

[...]. L'Italia per ripartire ha bisogno anche degli italiani di Londra' ('And then I think of all the people I met writing this book, of their stories, of those faces brimming with optimism [...]. To start again Italy needs the Italians of London too').¹¹² This is not to say that the text as a whole paints an inaccurately rosy portrait of Italian migration - indeed, Forte's attention to drug abuse and the 'Italian connection' with the heroin trade offers a valuable insight into a phenomenon neglected by similar accounts.¹¹³ The chapter dedicated to the Italian hospitality industry in London is interesting precisely because of the unapologetic bias of his perspective; it is the author's narration, as much as the interviewees he cites, that lends weight to Colpi's hypothesis that the catering industry is also a form of enacting Italian identity.¹¹⁴ Charting the tentative resistance to the French tradition of *haute cuisine* in the 1940s and the anglicization impelled by the experience of World War Two as the 'enemy within', through the popularity of the 1950s coffee bar to the capital's present-day appetite for all things Italian, Forte emphasizes 'l'inossidabile saldatura tra impresa, territorio e famiglia' ('the enduring bond between business, homeland and family').¹¹⁵ I have taken Forte's celebration of the Italian restaurants and coffee bars in London as an enactment of Italian identity and personal and familial affect as evidence that critical attention to these sites as public investments of Italian identity is overdue.

Similarly, I found the author's fleeting note (again, its brevity understandable, given the scope of the text) of the language of the older generations of the Bedford Italian community an encouraging hint of the potential of focusing on the critical site of language itself. The Bedford community, as Colpi explains, is distinct in that migrants came almost exclusively from Southern Italy via connections to the brick industry (initially in the 1950s via impersonal recruitment schemes and subsequently in the 1960s through chain migration, one element of what Colpi distinguishes as the 'new' Italian community related to the mass emigration from Italy in the aftermath of World War Two).¹¹⁶ Forte reports on how the largely illiterate first generation of migrants, after over fifty years living in England, communicate today in a mix of southern Italian dialect and English:

¹¹² Forte, p. 249.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 179-88.

¹¹⁴ Colpi, p. 22.

¹¹⁵ Forte, pp. 152-72 (p. 170). On the anglicization of Italian names see also Colpi, p. 139.

¹¹⁶ Colpi, pp. 153-58, p. 184.

In questo babilonia di lingue e dialetti è stato coniato nei decenni un curioso vocabolario fusion, un pidgin italo-inglese. Ecco qualche esempio:

(In this babel of languages and dialects, over the decades, a curious fusion vocabulary has been coined, an Italo-English pidgin. Here are some examples:)

Fare il sacco (*to sack*): licenziare
Checca (*cake*): dolce, dessert
Briccolaio (*bricklayer*): muratore
Ghetto (*gate*): cancello
Basamento (*basement*): seminterrato
Fornitura (*furniture*): mobilio
Sciabola (*shovel*): badile
Graduato (*graduate*): laureato
Parcare (*to park*): parcheggiare
Molleggio (*mortgage*): mutuo
Ingheggio (*engagement*): fidanzamento
Boifrendo (*boyfriend*): fidanzato.¹¹⁷

This intriguing list; the creativity it bespeaks and the quotidian reality from which it is born, brings me back to my argument that it is necessary to scrutinize further the covert mechanisms and values of *language in context*. The irony of Forte's own, seemingly unconscious, translanguaging in his description of 'un vocabolario fusion' – 'fusion' is not an Italian word – should not go unnoticed here. I return to this list, and Forte's framing of it, in Chapter V to examine how linguistic practice can work in unexpected ways enable belonging and how we might best reap the didactic benefits of such fluid resourcefulness.

The second and final text I want to briefly comment on is Azadeh Medaglia's *Patriarchal Structures and Ethnicity in the Italian Community in Britain*.¹¹⁸ As cited previously, *Patriarchal Structures* has been criticized by Sprio for a failure to support

¹¹⁷ Forte, p. 142.

¹¹⁸ Azadeh Medaglia, *Patriarchal Structures and Ethnicity in the Italian Community in Britain* (London: Ashgate, 2001).

its proposition of a dedicated gender relations study with empirical evidence.¹¹⁹ I don't want to rehearse the same critique here; going beyond my frustration at inaccurate generalizations ('Italians constitute an ethnic group although they are European, white and Christian. Their ethnicity is signified by their use of Italian language, their social customs, and their religion (Roman Catholicism)',¹²⁰ or 'there are no reasons for thinking there are significant differences amongst Italians in different parts of Britain'),¹²¹ Medaglia's text brings into sharp relief the question of positionality and its importance, and my own approach is a response to the issues I identify in her account.

In her introduction, Medaglia explains 'I chose the subject of patriarchy because, having been born and raised in a patriarchal society, I have been subjected for most of my life to patriarchy in both its public and private forms', and her articulation of the personal prejudice she encountered during her research indicates the promise of her position:

On several occasions I have been told by other academics that my not being Italian could constitute a weakness for the study at and that as an Iranian, I should naturally be researching the Iranian community. I find the suggestion that *it would have been most natural for me to investigate the Iranian community* as objectionable, Eurocentric, and usually directed from Western academics to non-Western researchers. The developing countries are indebted to many Western social scientists for having meticulously and usefully researched various aspects of their societies and I believe researchers from developing countries should have an equal opportunity to investigate aspects of Western societies.¹²²

This is convincing reasoning, echoed by Miller's assertion that all people should be 'equal in their right to the burden of being studied by some or other anthropologist'.¹²³ But Medaglia's favourable premise is, for me, contradicted by a lack of positionality within the investigation as a whole. Beyond stating that her Italian husband facilitated

¹¹⁹ Sprio, pp. 67-75.

¹²⁰ Medaglia, p. 1.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹²² Medaglia, p. 4; author's emphasis.

¹²³ Daniel Miller, *Stuff*, p. 10.

her circulation 'within the community', Medaglia provides no account of how her own position influenced the research: who or what constitutes this community, and how does Medaglia identify herself within it? How, when, and where did Medaglia select the community women she interviewed in her focus group session? How might their perception of her have influenced their answers? By neglecting to address these questions and to explain more accurately the context in which interviews took place, the participant comments that Medaglia reports, for all that they are striking, seem dubiously abstract. Intriguing and powerful statements such as 'it is a disaster when an Italian man marries an English woman', or 'our hearts are made of flesh, English women's hearts are made of bronze' beg further questions which remain unanswered: were these comments made in response to a direct question (if so, what was asked?) or part of a more spontaneous discussion? How did Medaglia react? I was also uneasy with the simplicity of yes/no answers Medaglia seems to have actively steered her participants towards:

At the end of the interview, I summarized saying: *'it appears that Italian women sacrifice their lives for their family, work very hard both in paid employment and at home without much help from their husbands. Their sexuality is controlled by the edicts of the Catholic Church'*. They all agreed. I then asked whether they felt in any way oppressed and exploited. They all said 'No' in protest.¹²⁴

Bearing in mind my disappointment as a reader at the absence of reflexivity in this account, I have tried to present the interviews I undertook as a dialogue in which my own perspective can also be put under scrutiny. In the section below I will explain the sites and texts considered, as well as how I came across them and at the end of this chapter I provide details of my own position. I have tried, however, throughout the thesis to make evident my personal stake in this inquiry and highlight situations of explicit ambiguity, tension, or misunderstanding, and will return to the implications of my own position in the conclusion. This is probably also a good point to dutifully state that ethical consent was received from all participants prior to interview – a somewhat empty statement which suffocates the important questions raised by the responsibility of researching real living people and again, and an issue I will come

¹²⁴ Medaglia, p. 144; author's emphases.

back to in my conclusion. Participants whose interviews are used as material for analysis had the opportunity to review, comment on, and retract statements or the entire interview transcript. I use initials, for example 'B', to refer to people present during interview or observation but from whom ethical consent was not requested.

ii. What the thesis will offer: a critical investigation of expressions of Italian mobility through a focus on food ‘stuff’

The fact pasta became Italian, and that its Chinese origin became irrelevant, is the essential culture-producing process in this case. Whether origins are maintained or obliterated is a question of the practice of identity.

Jonathan Freidman, ‘Global System, Globalization and the Parameters of Modernity’,¹²⁵

During the initial stages of the project, which was originally conceived as a study of transnational stardom and Anglo-Italian celebrities, the current proliferation of Italian celebrity chefs and popularity of ‘authentic’ Italian restaurants marked food as one of the most outwardly identifiable sites of Italian-ness and a useful point of departure. As research progressed, however, I became interested in Italian food, or more accurately ‘foodways’, the term used to encompass the entirety of ‘behaviours and beliefs surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of food’,¹²⁶ as a site which in itself implicated a diverse range of actors, processes and meanings. In this section, I will explain what it is I want to achieve by using foodways and food-related narratives as a lens to profile Italian mobility and outline the issues I intend to focus on from this perspective.

In a short letter addressed to *Anthropology Today* in the 1980s, Arjun Appadurai suggests that at the heart of the concept of culinary authenticity lie the issues of originality, doubt, fidelity, contagion, and stability.¹²⁷ These are themes we will revisit throughout the thesis, in various guises and in a variety of environments. At this

¹²⁵ Jonathan Freidman, ‘Global System, Globalization and the Parameters of Modernity’, in *Global Modernities*, ed. by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), pp. 69-90 (p.74).

¹²⁶ I use Carole M. Counihan’s definition, as per *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power* (Hove: Psychology Press, 1999), p. 2. As shorthand for a holistic system of food conceptualization, procurement, preservation, preparation and consumption, the term is usually attributed to Jay Anderson - see *Scholarship on Contemporary American Folk Foodways* (Copenhagen: Ethnologia Europaea, 1971), pp. 56-63 - though it is likely to originate in American anthropology of the 1940s (John William Bennet in 1941, and slightly later, in 1948, John Honigman used the term to refer to general food habits of a population).

¹²⁷ Arjun Appadurai, ‘On Culinary Authenticity’, *Anthropology Today*, 2.4 (1986) 24-25.

stage, I want to concentrate on how the 'mirage' of authenticity is significant precisely because of its specious nature: only by recognising the ideal of 'the authentic' as a social construct can we critically interpret the meaning it acquires in different contexts. To this end, it seems worth quoting extensively Appadurai's early thoughts. Justifying his pains to avoid using the word, he writes:

Authenticity measures the degree to which something is more or less what it *ought* to be. It is thus a norm of some sort. But is it an immanent norm, emerging somehow from the cuisine itself? Or is it an external norm, reflecting some imposed gastronomic standard? If it is an immanent norm, who is its authoritative voice: the professional cook? the average consumer? the gourmand? the housewife? If it is an imposed norm, who is its privileged voice: the connoisseur of exotic food? the tourist? the ordinary participant in a neighbouring cuisine? the cultivated eater from a distant one?

These questions lead to the first puzzle of authenticity. Authenticity is typically not the concern of the native participants in a culinary tradition, except when they (and the food) are far from home. It generally arises in the contexts of export, tourism, gourmandise, and exoticism. The concern with authenticity indicates some sort of doubt, and this sort of doubt is rarely part of the discourse of an undisturbed culinary tradition. It is the problem of the outsider. Yet its very invocation reflects our yearning, as outsiders, for a set of criteria of genuineness in the cuisine we are exploring. Like all mirages, authenticity drives us to immense efforts in our pursuit of it, but invariably vanishes just when we think we have it. When a cultivated external concern looks for an untutored internal basis, frustration is the inevitable result. It follows that an expert in an alien cuisine is a person who has access to another expert.

The second puzzle about authenticity is its relationship to quality. Quality is typically the insider's concern, authenticity that of the culinary tourist. We often admit that there is food that, though inauthentic, is good. But can we as easily speak of food that is authentic but bad? It is difficult to come up with examples of the latter sort. What is involved in such cases are items we intuitively suspect exemplify their culinary tradition in one

sense but not in another. These senses are difficult to discriminate, especially in practice.

The final puzzle about authenticity reminds us of Hegel's observation about the 'Owl of Minevra'. Authenticity as a criterion seems always to emerge just after its subject matter has been significantly transformed. How is one to generate stable criteria of authenticity for traditions that are always changing? All cuisines have a history: tastes shift, regional distinctions go in and out of focus, new techniques and technologies appear. New foods come in and go out of vogue in all complex culinary traditions. The idea of authenticity seems to imply a timeless perspective on profoundly historical processes. Thus, the transhistorical ring of authenticity with which the word authenticity is sometimes used in the evaluation of foreign cuisines is spurious.¹²⁸

In short, we can best understand 'the authentic' as a productive repository of invested meanings. As per Freidman's very apt example, behind any fantasy of authentic food lie complex processes of globalization, cultural syncretism, and projections of very local and perhaps contradictory meanings, values, and anxieties.¹²⁹ This means that the more constructive path is not to try and identify the 'real' cultures behind such romanticism, but, as Ian Cook and Philip Crang argue, 'to work with the surface of fetishism of commodities'.¹³⁰ From the celebration of Sophia Loren's declaration 'tutto quello che vedete, boys, lo devo alla pasta italiana' ('everything you see, boys, is down to Italian pasta'), to the gastronomically cathartic Italy of Elizabeth Gilbert's best-selling novel *Eat, Pray, Love* (2006), global popular culture continues to remediate and perpetuate the link between food and ideas of Italian identity. Food is also invested with strong local meanings within Italy, as Ecker points out.¹³¹ At the same time, the economic structures of Italian migration to the UK, and in particular London, are historically underpinned by food; initially in the early twentieth century, via ice-cream carts, fish and chip shops, and cafés and then, after World War II, with the introduction of pizzerie, trattorie, and coffee bars.¹³² This trend

¹²⁸ Appadurai, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁹ Freidman, pp. 69-90.

¹³⁰ Ian Cook and Philip Crang, 'The world on a plate: culinary culture, displacement and geographical knowledge', *Journal of Material Culture*, 1.2 (1996), 131-35 (p.148).

¹³¹ Ecker, p. 34.

¹³² Colpi, p. 22.

appears no less marked today, given that the hospitality and catering sectors often represent a sort of ‘rite of passage’ for a large proportion of incoming Italian migrants to the UK and employment in the catering industry has been read as an expression of cultural-ethnic identification.¹³³ So by approaching transnational Italian mobility from a foodways perspective, the project connects on the one hand with the broader socio-historical patterns of migration from Italy to England whilst on the other offers a means to critically engage with national and local stereotypes. Through my attention to class, value and personal identity processes, one of the central inquiries of this thesis will be what stereotyped readings of ‘being Italian’ can reveal as projections of desires and anxieties proper to both migrants themselves and the ‘host’ culture within the shared transnational space in which they are invoked.

I would stress again that this task of thinking sensitively and critically through national stereotypes is linked to the work of Modern Languages more generally. Perhaps this is why the notable ‘explosion’ of academic interest in food of the last two decades is now promisingly seeping into the discipline.¹³⁴ Writing within Italian Studies, Adalgisa Giorgio concludes her ethnographic study of Italians in Wellington calling for further attention to how inter-generational and cross-cultural self-perceptions of Italian-ness play out today and acknowledging food as a primary site of cultural transfer.¹³⁵ French and francophone studies scholar Debra Kelly’s recent investigation of French gastronomy in London as ‘a migrant culture on display’ is a practical example of how a food-oriented approach can, in Kelly’s words, broaden ‘understanding of conceptions, experiences and perceptions of migration, migrant identities and reciprocal cultural exchanges more generally’.¹³⁶ Kelly’s perspective is particularly valuable for the way in which she foregrounds food as a site in which *both* migrant and ‘host’ culture are heavily invested:

¹³³ Colpi, p. 22, cf. Anne-Marie Fortier, *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity* (New York; Oxford: Berg, 2000) p. 42.

¹³⁴ *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 3rd edn, ed. by Carole M. Counihan and Penny Van Esteric (Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹³⁵ Adalgisa Giorgio, ‘The Italian family, motherhood and Italian-ness in New Zealand. The case of the Italian community of Wellington’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 52 (2015) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.06.002>> 53-62 (p. 56).

¹³⁶ Debra Joanne Kelly, ‘A Migrant Culture on Display: the French Migrant and French Gastronomy in London (19th to 21st centuries)’, *Modern Languages Open* (September 2016) <<http://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.148>> (p. 34).

The restaurant, and the relationship to food more generally, is a complex site of power relations, of taste, of social and personal esteem, of tradition, of cultural habit, of rites and rituals and of modes of behaviour strictly codified in both migrant and host culture, of social control, or public identity, of seeing and being seen, of new experiences (and some fear of these).¹³⁷

It is this multiplicity of potentially conflicting investments and interpretations that I will centre on, balancing attention to the mediated construct of gastronomic Italy with an ethnographic approach that takes into account the personal narratives connected to these sites. My study in this way builds on the long-established interest in the symbolic communicative power of food, which can be traced in literary readings of food (for example, Jacques Derrida's comparisons between the act of eating and assimilating the values and ideals of others in his work on the 'cannibalistic tropes' of German Idealism),¹³⁸ but is equally supported by the history of more sociological or applied inquiries into cooking and consumption practice (for example, Roland Barthes' 1961 semiotics of food, Pierre Bourdieu's 1979 theory of class distinction).¹³⁹ Whichever way you look at it then, food and eating are, as sociologist Deborah Lupton affirms, 'central to our subjectivity, or sense of self, and our experience of embodiment, or the ways that we live in and through our bodies, which itself is inextricably linked with subjectivity'.¹⁴⁰

I will be considering a variety of food-related Italian 'stuff', as Miller rebelliously dubs it, and I will borrow his non-definition:

¹³⁷ Kelly, p. 34.

¹³⁸ Daniel Birnbaum, Jacques Derrida, Anders Olsson, 'An Interview with Jacques Derrida on the Limits of Digestion', 25 October 1990
<<http://users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/interviewJacquesDerridaonDigestion.pdf>> [accessed 16 March 2017]; Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well,'" or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida', in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. by Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 96-119.

¹³⁹ Roland Barthes, 'Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption', 1961 (translator not credited), published in *Food and Culture: A Reader* 3rd edn, ed. by Carole M. Counihan, and Penny Van Esteric, pp. 23-29; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979; London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁴⁰ Deborah Lupton, *Food, Body and the Self* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 1.

Don't, just don't, ask for or expect a clear definition of 'stuff'. Sure, there are academic traditions that believe knowledge is best conveyed through such clear definitions. This is perhaps essential in the natural sciences. But personally I have always had a horror of what I think of as pedantic semantics. To try and determine the exact criteria by which some things would be excluded from *stuff* as perhaps less tangible, or too transient, would be a hopeless exercise. Does an email or a fashion count as stuff, a kiss or a leaf or polystyrene packaging?¹⁴¹

The range of 'stuff' the thesis engages with is highly eclectic and potentially incommensurable. In this respect, my approach is anthropological, not sociological. There are no robust, generalizable 'findings'; my contribution is not empirical, but methodological. The aim is to demonstrate the value of this type of engagement from a Modern Languages perspective. I highlight the theoretical transferability of my analysis, but there is equal focus on particularity, circumstance, interview dynamic, and individual meaning: the reader has access to the details of each specific case and it is for them to ponder wider relevance and applicability. I will be looking at public cafés, cookbooks, visual media, published written narratives and crucially, the personal narratives of individuals related to these various spaces as recounted in interview. The sites I report on in the thesis are three informal eating spaces, Terroni of Clerkenwell, Sud Italia, and Fud; the walking tour company SharedCity and its guided tour of 'authentic Italy' in London; the texts of an Anglo-Italian author, Simonetta Agnello Hornby; and the media portrayal and performance of celebrity figure, Italian chef Gennaro 'Gino' D'Acampo, together with personal narratives as recounted in interview related to these sites.

Terroni of Clerkenwell is a historic family-run Italian café and delicatessen in London. After a period of closure, Terroni re-opened under new management in 2012 and the café has in many ways resumed its nineteenth-century role as a 'hub' of Italian activity.¹⁴² Next to St. Peter's Italian Church, on the boundary of what was once London's Italian quarter, it serves as a meeting-place for what Colpi, writing prior to

¹⁴¹ Miller, p. 1.

¹⁴² 'Terroni, Cav. Raffaele', Anglo-Italian Family History Society, online: <http://www.anglo-italianfhs.org.uk/transcriptions/terroni_raffaele.shtml> [accessed 4 January 2016].

more recent mobility patterns, calls the ‘new’, and Scotto calls the ‘old’, Italian community - those Italians arriving between the end of World War Two and the 1970s from predominately rural areas.¹⁴³ The overt Italian-ness of this site also makes it a preferred meeting point for walking tours of London’s former ‘Little Italy’ like SharedCity (see below), and the thesis is particularly concerned with the meanings read onto the *conspicuousness* of this Italian space; its visibility, its tangibility, even its audibility - one visitor who didn’t speak Italian commented that the ‘only negative point was that staff were unable to provide the advice I needed due to limited English’.¹⁴⁴

The personal narrative I focus on related to this site is that of Val. Now retired and living in Suffolk, Val grew up in London, just a short walk from Clerkenwell, as the daughter and granddaughter of Italian migrants. Her grandfather worked in Terroni. Val’s mother was English, and her father and paternal grandparents were Italian. We were put in e-mail correspondence by my mother, who attended Italian language lessons with her in 2009 and remembered Val’s recommendation of Terroni. I met Val for the first time in December 2015 in Terroni, where pictures of her grandfather still adorn the walls. I interviewed her together with Mario Badagliacca, TML’s artist in residence, who photographed her and the objects he had invited her to bring as part of his ‘Italy is Out’ photography exhibition.¹⁴⁵

Terroni was also the site where I first met Nadia, the daughter of Italian migrants who describes herself as Anglo-Italian, again in December 2015. This meeting was organized by Mario after we worked together on Val’s interview. I assisted when Mario photographed Nadia and the objects she chose – related to her bilingual theatre company – for ‘Italy is Out’. I maintained contact with Nadia online and through attending some of the events she organized at St. Peter’s Church, and interviewed her in July 2016. Her comments prompted me to reflect on the generational memory of social class, as explained in the following section.

¹⁴³ Scotto, pp. 155-56.

¹⁴⁴ Google user review by depeeps, ‘Terroni of Clerkenwell Google Reviews’, September 2016, online: <<https://www.google.co.uk>> [accessed 29 March 2017].

¹⁴⁵ ‘BEYOND BORDERS. Transnational Italy/OLTRE I CONFINI. Italia Transnazionale’ exhibition, curated by Gravano and Grechi.

Sud Italia is a 'mobile' pizzeria van stationed at London's Old Spitalfields Market. Again, I was interested in the visibility of this site; the van has been the object of much enthusiastic media attention. The contradiction between the possibility of movement implicit in the customised 1974 Citroën H van and the now static state of this vehicle also seemed particularly pertinent to the notion of mobility; the expression tension between the desirability of mobility/security is a theme discussed in each chapter. The founder and managing director of Sud Italia is Silvestro. Silvestro moved from Pescara, Abruzzo to London four years ago as did I, a coincidence which significantly impacted on the dynamic of our interview. After visiting the pizza van, chatting informally with other employees, and e-mail correspondence explaining my interests, I interviewed Silvestro in Old Spitalfields in January 2016.

SharedCity is a small enterprise that offers walking tours of 'London's diverse cultural communities' with local guides. Intrigued by the promise of 'a truly authentic trip to London's Little Italy' promoted by the website,¹⁴⁶ I attended the three-hour tour in June 2016 with a view to access potential sites of interest for my study and attract more participants. I was forced to re-think my admittedly sceptical curiosity as to what exactly was sold under the pretext of authenticity during the tour and concluding meal. The thesis analyses this case study as an example of the role that the appeal of authenticity may play in cultural exchange as it is played out in quotidian practice. To assist in this, I draw also on an interview with Deborah, the co-founder and director of SharedCity. Deborah leads the 'Little Italy' tour, which is how we first met. She was born and grew up in North London. Her mother is Italian and her father is Indian. I interviewed Deborah in October 2016 in Hilly Fields, London.

I have included a few comments from one further interview that is not directly related to the sites considered, but that is useful for the grounded insights offered; that of Giorgio. Giorgio is a management consultant specializing in the food industry. Giorgio

¹⁴⁶ 'A truly authentic trip to London's Little Italy. We start with a visit to St Peter's Italian church hidden in the heart of old Italian Clerkenwell. After seeing the church, your Italian (well half Italian!) guide Deborah, will tell you about the history of the community, give you a tour of the historic streets and then take you to the Italian Social Club, to join a group of very friendly retired community members for a delicious *caffè*, *antipasti* and pastries (included in ticket price!). SharedCity is about travelling the world without leaving London!' SharedCity, online: <<http://www.sharedcity.co.uk/booking>> [accessed 29th March 2017].

moved to the UK with his wife, who is also Italian, in 2012 (after a prior period in the capital in his late teens and early twenties). We were put in contact by an academic colleague familiar with my research interests. He was interviewed on the premises of one of his clients, Arancina, in June 2016. Arancina is a small, family-run chain of restaurants in Rome and London and online Italian food brand operating since 1996.

These examples are geographically rooted in London, a historic and contemporary nexus of Italian migration, and particularly, as we have seen, of the Italian catering industry in the UK. As I hope to have made clear, I am reluctant to consider them in any way representative of the experience of Italians in England (let alone Britain, given the very diverse situations of Italians in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland; when I write about ‘migration to Britain’ or a ‘British-Italian’ it is only in line with the scholars whose work I reference). Their specificity notwithstanding, they are implicated in a much wider web of transnational relations and investment in ideas of ‘Italy’ and ‘England’ that circulate across and within both nation-states, and it became clear to me that the relevance of the issues they raise extends beyond these geographical contexts, as I will stress in individual chapters. Tracking a ‘new connectivity’ brought about by technological development, David N. Gellner has argued for the development of multi-sited ethnography which can follow not only people but also ‘things, metaphors or plots as they move around between cultures’,¹⁴⁷ and I wanted to track how similar ideals of ‘traditional’ and ‘authentic’ Italy were upheld or contested within local value systems. For these reasons, together with the fact it seems a little self-contradictory to restrict an inquiry into transnational movement to the geographical boundaries of a nation-state, I have chosen to include a further physical site that is not based in London: Fud, in Palermo, Sicily.

I visited the Palermo branch of Sicilian restaurateur and food blogger Andrea Graziano’s Fud in November 2015 (the first branch in Catania opened in 2012) when attending a talk in the city by Anglo-Italian writer Simonetta Agnello Hornby. Presented as ‘qualcosa di più semplice, alla portata di tutti’ (‘something more simple, open to

¹⁴⁷ David N. Gellner, ‘Uncomfortable Antinomies. Going Beyond Methodical Nationalism in Social and Cultural Anthropology’, in *Beyond Methodological Nationalism: Research Methodologies for Cross-Border Studies*, ed. by Anna Amelina, Devrimsel D. Nergiz, Thomas Faist and Nina Glick Schiller (New York: Routledge, 2012) pp. 111-28 (p. 114).

everyone'),¹⁴⁸ the defining feature of Fud is its use of English words which are transcribed phonetically according to Italian pronunciation (as per the name, 'Fud' for 'Food'). My host Rossana's enthusiastic suggestion that I find time to visit Fud during my time in the city, because 'sono le parole inglesi, ma come le utilizziamo noi' ('they're English words, but how we use them') is the first reason I chose to include this site within the project.

The text I will focus on is the culinary memoir and autobiographical narrative of the Anglo-Italian writer Simonetta Agnello Hornby, *Il pranzo di Mosè*, published in Italy in 2014 and contemporarily broadcast as a seven-episode cookery series,¹⁴⁹ as well as, to a lesser extent, *La mia Londra*,¹⁵⁰ and *Un filo d'olio*.¹⁵¹ Agnello Hornby (b. Palermo, 1945) is a naturalized British citizen. Having lived outside of Italy since 1967 and spent most her adulthood in England, these texts can be studied as products explicitly born out of the author's experience of movement between nations and eras. They are used to highlight the complex interlocking of the selective romanticising of the past with personal memory and invite new interpretations of the significance of cultural nostalgia.

Finally, the figure of 'the nation's favourite Italian chef', celebrity chef and television personality Gennaro 'Gino' D'Acampo is analysed as an embodied 'performance' of authenticity. I decided to focus on Gino as perhaps the most vigorous and controversial stereotype within a category of highly visible Italian chefs like Antonio Carluccio, Gennaro Contaldo, and Giorgio Locatelli, and because I noticed his books displayed in Terroni. Here again, as with SharedCity, my concern has been to tease out some of the practical implications of being recognized as 'authentic' whilst considering mobility as a lived experience. I consider D'Acampo's positioning across a range of visual and print media from 2010, following the substantial increase in media attention prompted by his successful participation in the 2009 television series, *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!*, to his most recent television series and

¹⁴⁸ Fud: Bottega Sicula, online: <<http://www.cibodistrada.it/locali/fud-bottega-sicula>> [accessed 11 November 2016].

¹⁴⁹ Simonetta Agnello Hornby, *Il pranzo di Mosè* (Florence and Milan: Giunti, 2014); 'Il pranzo di Mosè', *RealTime*, 11 September 2014 – 13 December 2014: <<http://www.realtimetv.it/programmi/il-pranzo-di-mose/>> [accessed 4 January 2017].

¹⁵⁰ Simonetta Agnello Hornby, *La mia Londra* (Florence and Milan: Giunti, 2014).

¹⁵¹ Simonetta Agnello Hornby, *Un filo d'olio* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2011).

tie-in publication, *Gino's Hidden Italy: How to Cook Like a True Italian*.¹⁵² I will not examine D'Acampo's role in *I'm a Celebrity* specifically, though I will refer to comments from press articles relating to this series. My analysis centres instead on cookery books, appearances on *This Morning* (a daytime television series and D'Acampo's first significant television role, 2009-present), *Celebrity Juice* (a late-peak television comedy panel game, 2014-present), and *Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste of the Sun*, a series of six 30 minute episodes broadcast on 8pm Fridays between September and October 2014, and tie-in publication,¹⁵³ together with his presentation in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers.¹⁵⁴ I also take into account the limited media attention his figure has received in Italy, commercial ventures and a guest television appearance on *Through the Keyhole*.¹⁵⁵ Though I have been unable to interview D'Acampo myself, I draw on the comments he makes in two published personal interviews.

Through this multi-sited ethnography of Italian stuff, my aim is to scrutinise the meanings interpreted at the intersection of commercial strategies and macro socio-historic structures, with micro consumer practices, individual processes of identification and self-realization; in other words, the more 'mundane' aspects of life which are 'capable of revealing angles obscured by official histories'.¹⁵⁶ At its core, then, the thesis is inspired by Michel de Certeau's recognition of a need to sketch 'a theory of everyday practices in order to bring out of their murmuring the "ways of operating" that, as a majority in social life, often only figure as "resistances" or as apathies in relation to the development of sociocultural production'.¹⁵⁷ It will scrutinize the micro 'ways of operating' represented in the personal narratives related

¹⁵² Gino D'Acampo, *Gino's Hidden Italy: How to Cook Like a True Italian* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2016).

¹⁵³ Gino D'Acampo, *Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste of the Sun* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014).

¹⁵⁴ The specific episodes I refer to are (where possible, with online clips referenced): *This Morning*, ITV, 5 October 2010; *This Morning*, ITV, 27 January 2011; *This Morning*, 25 September 2014 *This Morning*, ITV, 21 November 2016; *Celebrity Juice*, ITV2, 10 November 2011 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IAS9tds1wU>> [accessed 23 January 2017]; *Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste of the Sun*, ITV, 10 October 2014 (the second programme of the second edition of this series in which Gino visits Bologna). The first series of six emissions was broadcast under the title of *Gino's Italian Escape* between 13 September-25 October 2013.

¹⁵⁵ *Through the Keyhole*, ITV, 29 August 2015; 'My Restaurant' and 'My Pasta Bar'.

¹⁵⁶ Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Cultures of Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 51.

¹⁵⁷ Luce Giard, 'History of a Research Project', in *The Practice of Everyday Life. Volume 2: Living and Cooking*, ed. by Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. xiii-xxxiii (p. xx).

to the sites above, and will close by investigating how this type of creative and critical perspective may be brought into Higher Education language teaching. In the final part of the thesis, I will report on the application of a specific model of collaborative translation in language teaching undertaken as part of the project 'Collaborative Translation: A Model for Inclusion' (Monash and Warwick, July 2016-July 2017) coordinated by Jessica Trevitt and Gioia Panzarella.¹⁵⁸

I will now clarify the questions of class, value, and meaning that my investigation will centre on. In the following section, I explain how I came to be interested in these themes, discuss the critical framework of the thesis and lay out my overarching approach to the sites detailed above.

iii. Methodology: exploring value, meaning and the self through 'tactics' and 'use-value'. Critical references and key terms.

How does Britishness express itself in me? In a fondness for Chinese duck, Indian chicken, Jamaican coffee and French bread? In a reverence for Mozart, or a devotion to writers from Buenos Aires, Prague, Chicago and St. Lucia? In a liking for mountainous scenery, or a dislike of crowds? In a preference for sunshine over rain, wine over beer? In a secular fondness for cathedrals, or a weakness for cricket? [...]. Is this a typically British list? Yes. Is it exclusively British? Absolutely not [...]. If I have anything to declare in my cultural luggage it is primarily to do with class.

Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain*.¹⁵⁹

Amidst reports of the contemporary 'migrant crisis' in Europe, we need not look far for a reminder of how seemingly entrenched and insuperable class boundaries can be quite suddenly shattered and reconstituted in the process of migration. In their juxtaposition of descriptions of disembarked arrivals as 'doctors, bankers and Syrians from other high-paying professions' with images of sandal-clad families picking

¹⁵⁸ 'Collaborative Translation: A Model for Inclusion', online:

<<https://transcollaborate.wordpress.com>> [last accessed 22 August 2017].

¹⁵⁹ Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London: Abacus, 2005), p. 470.

through rubble and crowds and clutching dusty plastic bags of clothes and food,¹⁶⁰ these accounts typically bespeak a disbelief that the 'have-nots' were perhaps once, elsewhere, the 'haves':

Many of the refugees living in camps in Lesbos, Greece - one of the most popular arrival points for refugees and migrants - had smartphones. At least a few people could speak English on every boat arriving to Lesbos, meaning that many of them likely had a formal education or came from an upper middle-class background.¹⁶¹

Migration can play tricks with class. This is because class is related to the circulation and conversion of capital, and capital is necessarily and always context specific, so movement from one context to another is inherently linked to the promise - or threat - of a radical reconfiguration of class.¹⁶² Listening and reading accounts today that look back to the life courses of Italian migrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we can trace a similar incredulity at the counter-process by which the 'have-not' Italian migrants, many of whom made the 1,200 mile journey from mountain villages in Frosinone to London on foot, became the 'haves'; achieving economic success and social security in Britain in spite of their beginnings in abject poverty in Italy. Arguably the most popular text written from within the Italian community dealing with the history of Italian migration to London, Olive Besagni's *A Better Life: A history of London's Italian immigrant families in Clerkenwell's Little Italy in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, is exemplary of the habitual framing of the history of London's Italian immigrant families in terms of class aspiration. The book's cover states:

¹⁶⁰ Jess McHugh, 'Europe Refugee Crisis Facts: Wealthy, Educated Syrians Risking Lives To Leave War', *International Business Times*, 9 October 2015, online: <<http://www.ibtimes.com/europe-refugee-crisis-facts-wealthy-educated-syrians-risking-lives-leave-war-2089018>> [accessed 11 November 2016].

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Beverley Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (Routledge: London, 2004), p. 17, cf. Pierre Bourdieu, 'Symbolic power', *Critique of Anthropology*, 4 (1979), 77-85; 'The social space and the genesis of groups', *Theory and Society* 14 (1985), 723-44; *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 2010 [1984]); 'What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups', *Berkley Journal of Sociology* (1987) 1-17.

This collection of almost 40 oral histories tells the stories of Italian families who emigrated to the slums of Clerkenwell, London from the early 19th century onwards in search of a better life than in the poverty-stricken rural hamlets of Northern, and later Southern, Italy. It vividly describes their courage in the face of hardship, their childhood preoccupations and family loyalties, their teachers and mentors, the trades and careers in which they endeavoured to gain a livelihood, their marriages within and without the community and the Catholic faith, the devastating effects of two World Wars on these families, their sicknesses, tragedies and triumphs.¹⁶³

From another perspective, Scotto's comparative sociological investigation of the 'old' and 'new' Italian communities in London also highlights the significance of class, using it to distinguish between the two groups. Of the 'old' first generation, Scotto states:

Because most of those who came in the 1950s and 1960s moved out from rural areas at a young age as they were in need of a job, it is not surprising that the majority of my respondents in this group had attended only a few years of schooling. The low level of education implied a complete lack of knowledge of the English language, which was indicated by most of my interviewees as the main hardship to face, once they had reached the UK. Fundamental in improving their English was the chance some migrants had to live or work with local people, but many Italians - especially women - did not have this chance, either because they were staying at home and taking care of their children, or because they were employed in the catering sector and thus spending most of their time with other Italians.¹⁶⁴

Scotto's analysis also indicates how the very terms used to differentiate between these forms of mobility mark a relationship between class, language and a sense of community. He highlights how the 'eurostars' (the young middle-class urban

¹⁶³ Olive Besagni, *A Better Life: A history of London's Italian immigrant families in Clerkenwell's Little Italy in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London: Camden History Society, 2011).

¹⁶⁴ Scotto, p. 156.

professionals) self-distinguished from the previous generation of Italian migration via the adoption of an anglicized moniker:

The so-called ‘new’ Italian migration is characterised by a wave of young, educated and often highly-skilled, workers and students. These people define themselves as ‘mobile people’ more than ‘migrants’, a term which had a derogatory connotation for several of my interviewees. Young mobile professionals are often simply labelled with the English word ‘Italians’. In 1998, the journalist Beppe Severgnini created an online forum in *Corriere della Sera* called ‘Italians’, a meeting point for Italians living abroad. As a consequence of the immediate and continued success of the forum and of the socio-economic characteristics of its users, the term Italians rather than the Italian word *italiani* came to refer to the newly-emerging professional migration.¹⁶⁵

One of the informants collaborating in this study, Nadia, the daughter of Italian migrants who identifies as Anglo-Italian, offered a spontaneous sketch of the disparate Italian experiences of London in class terms which echoes Scotto’s analysis. Her statement, which I will return to in Chapter II, is worth reproducing in full here for its hint at the way class awareness acts as a key arbitrator in the negotiation of her sense of self, even when the economic hardship and subordinate states she talks about have only been known through family narratives, and never experienced first-hand. Nadia’s father was born in London in 1928 to Italian parents, and her mother was born in Italy but moved to London when she was very young. This interview took place just after the Brexit vote result; she was explaining to me that her brother had just realised that he didn’t have Italian national status so was now in the process of applying for it. We had met in a coffee bar where we could hear lots of Italian being spoken, and we were also served by an Italian barista, which had led Nadia to comment, ‘my god, there’s so many Italian young people here, it’s just so different from when I grew up!’, and I wanted to prompt her to talk more about the differences from the present situation and her own childhood.

¹⁶⁵ Scotto, p. 158.

Nadia: But why would you [*laughing*]. I mean, my brother's the first born, I don't know why they just did it - perhaps it clicked half-way through, maybe they didn't realise! I was born only two years after my brother so perhaps they only realised (...) I don't know! Poor guy'll have to go through all the admin now!

Georgia: It's like on the one hand you've got your real lives and on the other the admin -

Nadia: Exactly.

Georgia: So, you were saying, it's strange now how there's so many Italians -

Nadia: I have to say, what I have noticed, and it's sort of crept up slowly and (..) the thing is with me, I've always been, um, I think through my theatre activities, I've always had a several identities because, so temping as a PA, working mostly in banking and finance, you've got the corporate people, the corporate Italians tend to be in Chelsea, and some of them tend to be a little bit like, I've noticed some of them wanting to integrate so much so that they try to lose their Italian accents sometimes, are a little bit envious that they're not born here, and they're a little bit, some of them - not all of them, but some are a little bit, you know, sort of, 'I'm a rich Italian' and it's a different type of Italian to Italians I would meet when I was a kid, or you know my summer holidays in Italy, who were very much working-class, in the village - my Mother's from near Treviso which is half an hour away from Venice, and - but (..) in a village, and she's essentially from, you know, a very working-class family. So they're the kind of Italians that I love, cherish, and remember (..) and if that makes me a poor person it's a bit - I'm actually that kind of - that's the kind of Italian that I remember, that I know, that's the kind of Italian I am, it's who I am, you know. My grandmother(..). So in a way you've got, these self-made Italians, because my parents worked very hard to - to become middle-class, in a way, because my father never stopped working and my mother worked really hard. But then you (..) so you have that; the bankers, the corporate

people; then you have the Anglo-Italians who I grew up with, the Italian community.

Historic and contemporary migration from Italy to London is therefore in many ways marked by class consciousness. Though on occasion scholars of historic Italian migration patterns have described the position of Italian migrants as subaltern,¹⁶⁶ I was initially reluctant to address the issue of power because the contemporary instances of mobility I examine in the thesis belong to a relatively privileged category of inter-European economic migration.¹⁶⁷ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has bluntly rejected wider definitions of subalterity, maintaining ‘if the subaltern can speak then, thank God, the subaltern is not a subaltern any more’; ‘if you can email, you’re not subaltern’,¹⁶⁸ and I do not want to conflate situations of extreme poverty and deprivation with the comparative luxury of a self-conscious perception of subordinate social positioning.¹⁶⁹ At the same time, however, participants in my study seemed to articulate what we could tentatively call a sensitivity to class and linguistic subalterity, and this emerged as a significant element of their sense of ‘being Italian’. And by insisting on the *silence* of subalterity, my concern is that we risk muting the more dynamic forms of self-representation enacted by groups and individuals whose sense of value, of self-worth, is in some way mediated through contestation of ideals and values of perceived dominant social groups. So I’d like to try and recuperate a little Gramsci’s original application of the term ‘subaltern’, which, as Marcus Green has pointed out, was nuanced and ambiguous: it was applied to non-commissioned military groups, but also the Church (‘no longer an ideological power but only a

¹⁶⁶ Pasquale Verdicchio, *Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism Through the Italian Diaspora* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997).

¹⁶⁷ As indicated previously, ongoing research suggests a ‘more diverse and unequal picture’ than these categories presume. See Varriale, <<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/eu-migrants-differences-inequalities-and-distinctions-1.html>>

¹⁶⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on the politics of the subaltern. Interview with H. Winant. *Socialist Review* 20.3 (1990), 85-97; and ‘Still Pushing for the Humanities’, London School of Economics Public Lecture, Monday 29 June 2015.

¹⁶⁹ Fortier has also highlighted her search for an acceptable terminology to describe the experience of Italian mobility, conceding ‘overall, Italian emigration cannot be compared to the exile of millions of Jews, the enslavement of Africans, or the flight of thousands of Cambodians’, pp. 16-21 (p. 17). For justification of the the term ‘diaspora’ in reference to Italian migration see also Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy’s Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

subaltern force'), and subsequently women and different races as well as a proletariat.¹⁷⁰

The absence of an adequate critical vocabulary to describe what we might, again provisionally, term a trans-generational sensitivity to the struggle represented by ethnic difference and class boundaries seems symptomatic of a lack of scholarly interest in the relationship between more mundane, lived experiences of the past, their impact and indeed, use, in the present. Whilst Hirsch's concept of postmemory as a definition of the relationship between first-generation Holocaust memories and later cohorts who experience or 'remember' events solely through the narratives and behaviour of others has been extended to explain the impact of a variety of cultural and personal trauma on subsequent generations,¹⁷¹ it seems both inappropriate and misleading to frame these stories in terms of postmemory. Their defining trope is not trauma, but pride. So I will reiterate instead the inviting question that Green poses in his critique of the more narrow definition that 'subalterity' has come to denote:

In this sense, if the subaltern are organized and represent themselves, they are no longer subaltern. But does this mean that they have somehow transformed themselves into dominant groups within society?¹⁷²

With this question in mind, a central aim of the analytical work of this thesis is to reflect critically on how *self-identification* with subalterity and struggle informs a sense of self. Specifically, the thesis will scrutinise the various values attributed to certain Southern, agricultural and working-class Italian cultures as part of an inquiry into individual and collective processes of meaning-making. As we will see, a classed ethnicity, even as an 'inherited' experience, can be a crucial element of an individual's sense of self, and thus raises interesting questions about the significance of class in memory and our understanding of selfhood.

¹⁷⁰ Marcus Green, 'Gramsci Cannot Speak: Presentations and Interpretations of Gramsci's Concept of the Subaltern', *Rethinking Marxism* 14.3 (2002), pp. 1-24 (pp. 1-2), cf. Gramsci Notebook 1 in *Quaderni del carcere*. 4 vols. Ed. V. Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi Editore, 1975) §.129.

¹⁷¹ Marianne Hirsch, 'Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory', *Discourse Special Issue: The Emotions, Gender, and the Politics of Subjectivity*, 15.2 (1992-93), 3-29.

¹⁷² Green, p. 19.

This wasn't meant to be a thesis about class. I wanted to write about personal identification processes, about the individual stories and their narrators that comprise communities of belonging that, as Dell Hymes level-headedly reasoned, cannot be accessed at 'the intersection of vectors of age, sex, race, class, income and occupation alone', but must be conceived of as *people*, as 'beings making sense out of their disparate experiences'.¹⁷³ But as I have reported, when I began inquiring into what it might mean to identify oneself as Italian or not, or *be* identified as Italian by others or not, or as Southern Italian or Neapolitan rather than Italian, class surfaced in different guises - in very disparate experiences - as a key factor in mediating a sense of self; opportunities, accents, self-perception in relation to family narratives. In short, class and selfhood seemed inextricably linked in ways that were often contradictory and surprising. This is how I became interested in the work of Beverley Skeggs. Skeggs confirms the relationship between class and selfhood as an inescapable reality from the reverse perspective, commenting:

I did not set out to, or even want to, write about the self, but found that the more I investigated different forms of class production, the more I became aware that different forms of personhood and individuality were integral to how class interests became inscribed onto different bodies in the name of 'the self'.¹⁷⁴

Throughout the thesis, I will draw on Skeggs's interpretation of use-value and exchange-value in relation to culture and the self. Given that many of the stories I have encountered are tied to economic migration patterns, Skeggs's construal of standard economic terms and the emphasis her methodology places on context, on everyday practice, and the way in which individuals make value, offers a way to access and interpret some of the complex processes I want to highlight in the spaces and narratives I will examine. I will draw on the finer points of Skeggs's arguments in Chapters 3 and 4, but will provide a very brief overview below of how her general theory is used in this thesis.

¹⁷³ Dell Hymes, *Language in Education: Ethnolinguistic Essays* (Washington, DC: Centre for Applied Linguistics: 1980), p. 94.

¹⁷⁴ Skeggs, p. 6.

In a review of approaches to economic, symbolic, cultural and moral exchange, Skeggs follows Igor Kopytoff in underlining how the colonialist distinction between ‘individualized persons’ and ‘commodified things’ forced the separation of ‘use from exchange-value, but also, significantly, served to associate certain forms of personhood with use and exchange-values’.¹⁷⁵ She tracks how the European, colonialist model of subjecthood established from the sixteenth century was predicated on the capacity to own and exchange property in one’s person, to recognise and claim the value of things in exchange – a construct that was set in contrast to the attachment of West Africans to material objects.¹⁷⁶ Thus, Skeggs explains, the “civilized” exercised a relationship to things based on a specific perspective on value; value was always about exchange’.¹⁷⁷ This ‘possessive individual’ (capable of owning property in his person) was an idea developed from small groups, which gradually became assumed by others who wanted to cement the authority of their own position, and became the foundation of seventeenth-century political theory.¹⁷⁸ Skeggs draws on Marxist theory to stress how use-value was the nature of the attachment of the labourers to the objects they produce, which become commodities for the European capitalist colonists who can access their exchange-value.¹⁷⁹ The different forms of personhood generated through relationship to commodities were related back to these colonial foundations; the working classes who produced commodities were associated with the primitive. This meant they were construed simultaneously as a threat to civil society, and as source of fascination for their imagined proximity to nature, their ‘authenticity’.¹⁸⁰ We will come back to all of this, and it will form the focus of my analysis in Chapter IV. The important thing to note at this point is the legacy of this today, that exchange-value can be assigned to aspects of working-class culture; ‘rather than being designated simply as

¹⁷⁵ Skeggs, p.8, cf. Igor Kopytoff ‘The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 64-91.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁷⁸ Skeggs, pp. 6-7, cf. Celia Lury, *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory, and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1998); Marilyn Strathern, *Property, Substance and Effect: Anthropological Essays on Persons and Things* (New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone, 1999), and Crawford Brough Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 9, cf. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 72.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 39, cf. Joel S. Kahn, *Modernity and Exclusion* (London: Sage, 2001).

pathological, some parts of the working class are represented as offering the potential for *consumption*'.¹⁸¹

I called this thesis 'Consuming Italy' because I wanted to highlight my interest in the 'consumption' of ideas of Italy – specifically in England, though I believe this imagined Italy can be productively placed in dialogue with the images upheld as desirable within national borders. I consider what might be hidden in the nostalgic visions of rural Italy, and, in light of Skeggs's comments, and what the desirability of the authenticity of Italian working-class culture might indicate, and the bricolage of testimonies and materials studied in the thesis (for example, Chapter II compares the tropes of a rural Sicily of author's youth to an image of Italy re-created in London's historic quarter, Chapter III evidences parallels between images of Italy within England with how Southern Italy is viewed within Italy, and Chapter V uses a site in Sicily as a point of departure) is one way of emphasizing the potential for further investigation of the resonance, or dissonance, of these tropes across national borders. I chose the title 'Consuming Italy' because I would like to focus on the figure of the consumer itself, too. My earlier quotation of de Certeau's call for a 'theory of everyday practices' is an extract from the research proposal which eventually became *The Practice of Everyday Life*, to which de Certeau's student Luce Giard added, 'the ruses of consumers compose the network of an antidiscipline which is the subject of this book'.¹⁸² I want to draw out the connotations of de Certeau's interpretation of consumers as active *producers of meaning* operating within the dominant structures of power in part to focus attention on the ways in which individuals make life meaningful in a philosophical sense – i.e. how people relate their own sense of self to a wider social environment. Power is taken here as Lupton evocatively describes it; an invisible, honey-like substance, coursing around and through us 'in various degrees of fluidity and sticky congealment', permeating all dimensions of social life.¹⁸³ Power cannot, therefore, be considered a 'repressive force' that can be 'removed', she explains, referencing a Foucauldian recognition of the omnipresence of power in producing knowledge and understanding:

¹⁸¹ Skeggs, p. 98.

¹⁸² Giard, 'History of a Research Project', in *The Practice of Everyday Life. Volume 2: Living and Cooking*, ed. by de Certeau, Giard, and Mayol (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. xiii-xxxiii (p. xx).

¹⁸³ Lupton, pp. 13-14, cf. *Transitions: New Australian Feminisms*, ed. by Barbara Caine and Rosemary Pringle (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995), p. xi.

People are not simply constrained by power relations, for their sense of self and embodiment are constructed through power relations: power is not, therefore, external to subjectivity. That is not to argue that some individuals are able to exert their will more successfully than others or are more socio-economically privileged than others.¹⁸⁴

In interview, one participant, Giorgio, alerted me to a helpful lens through which we might view individual practice in this context. Giorgio was speaking in purely commercial terms when he described the importance of authenticity according to the possibility it affords to smaller, family-owned enterprises businesses like those he manages to stake out a distinctive place within a competitive market and contend with larger multinational brands. 'More companies are putting focus on tradition. Because that's the only way to fight the massive companies', he explained. 'You cannot compete with Spaghetti House in terms of revenue. But you know they don't produce proper food'. In identifying this strategic deployment of authenticity by small companies, however, Giorgio's reasoning chimes with de Certeau's own understanding of how consumers operate as 'producers of meaning' that weave their own paths within broader structures of power. The precise wording of de Certeau's definition of a 'tactic', or the means through which individuals enact these processes of meaning-making, is worth quoting in full. According to de Certeau:

A tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it plays on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight and self-collection: it is a manoeuvre 'within the enemy's field of vision'. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at

¹⁸⁴ Lupton, pp. 13-14, cf. Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power', trans. by Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984) pp. 51-75.

any given moment. It is a guileful ruse. In short, a tactic is the art of the weak.¹⁸⁵

De Certeau's description of the space of a tactic as that of 'the other' within a 'foreign power'; its implicit mobility, but also weakness, also resonates strikingly with the practical experience of migration. The concept of a tactic is a therefore useful one which I will develop to map some of the personal strategies for meaning-making and claiming value implicated in the sites considered. I also want to stretch de Certeau's focus on purposefulness in modernity by, yet again, interpreting this 'active meaning-making' rather literally; by examining some of the creative ways in which language is re-worked to produce alternative, unexpected meanings and re-inscribed with value in different environments. So, developing de Certeau's notion of the tactic alongside Skeggs's theory of value, the chapters will examine the ways in which the tactical deployment of an 'Italian identity' and Italian cultural products exists not just alongside but as *part of* personal meaning-making processes, and some of the pedagogic implications of this in the language learning classroom. While Skeggs proposes a shift in attention to 'use-value', i.e., the worth of an asset for the individual who produces and uses it to avoid reproducing the same European colonialist model that posits exchange-value as the definitive factor in the construction of personhood, I want to focus on how use-value, in terms of pleasure, gratification, personal meaning, can be tied up in exchange-value. This is something that Skeggs acknowledges – referencing Marilyn Strathern's rejection of the commodity-logic of an exchange model placing the relationship between people (rather than the object or asset) at the centre of any transaction – she proposes that a model concentrating on use-value means:

It is possible to see people's dispositions, characteristics, culture and artefacts as having use-value only to themselves, both beyond exchange but also becoming an object of exchange the moment another person becomes interested in it/them.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 3rd edn, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 37.

¹⁸⁶ Skeggs, p.11, cf. Marilyn Strathern, 'Qualified value: the perspective of gift exchange', in *Barter, Exchange, and Value: An Anthropological Approach*, ed. by Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 169-91.

I will analyse how this interlocking of exchange- and use-value plays out in quotidian tactics; the memory of Italy and Italian ancestors will be explored as one site in which both exchange- and use-value are knotted together; another will be language itself, which will lead us to contemplate the consequences for language learning.

This just leaves us with the question of how exactly to go about trying to access 'use-value'. The questions I raise here are based on a prolonged period of participatory observation in the sites of Terroni and Sud Italia between October 2014-March 2017, with fortnightly visits to each site, with a more intense period of observation, conversation and note-taking between January-March 2017 (Terroni) and January-April 2016 (Sud Italia). I have only been able to visit Fud twice, in October 2015, and my analysis of this site is based on these visits and online media. Similarly, my analysis of SharedCity is based on my participation in two three-hour tours (13th July 2016 and 1st December 2016), online media, subsequent e-mail contact with other participants and discussion and recorded interview with Deborah. Chance, as you might already have guessed, has played an important role in the identification of these sites as useful case-studies, and one of the reasons I want to highlight the value of ethnography in Modern Languages research is precisely because of the space it not only allows, but encourages, for the incidental and unplanned. From my mother's connection with Val and the surprise find of Fud to unexpected 'clues' of potentially productive paths, such as a promotional display of Gino D'Acampo cookbooks in Terroni, chance encounters have shaped the research. Similarly, the unexpected opportunity to conduct an interview together with Mario introduced a new, intermedial approach that is mirrored in the thesis's attention to the visual.

iv. Methodology again: the circumstances of production and my position

The very idea of ‘bias’ binds us into an idea that social knowledge can be extracted from its relations, can, indeed, be ‘unbiased’. Yet to be unbiased would be to be unsituated, to not be a participant in the relations we attempt to analyze and hence [...] never to gain real insight into how people formulate their lives, how they understand and rationalise the events of their own and others’ lives, and what prompts them to act in particular ways.

Simone Abram, “‘Bias Binding’: Re-calling Creativity in Qualitative Research’.¹⁸⁷

Social anthropologist Simone Abram is reflecting on the pressure to distance herself from her ethnographic fieldwork - the year she spent working in a bar and living with a local family to investigate the effects of the ‘tourist gaze’ in rural France. Citing Abram’s work, Jenny Hockey, Allison James, and Carol Smart affirm that research reports are inevitably framed by personal relationships, and that ‘to pretend otherwise and therefore not to reflect on the significance of the circumstances of its production would be, in itself, another form of bias’.¹⁸⁸ An alternative paradigm, they argue, and one that more accurately reflects the crafting of knowledge, is that of narrative; research reports should be considered a form of storytelling. Back, similarly, has indicated how the application of classical ethnography to one’s own family or friends ‘reveals the farcical nature’ of such modes, stressing the need to embrace multiple strategies for studying and writing culture.¹⁸⁹

The call launched by Back and Hockey et al. is sharply contrasted by a deep-rooted partiality within Modern Languages that presumes that any research concerned in some way with ‘actual people’ must rely on sociological tools; quantitative data (and often lots of it), focus groups, questionnaires, etc., in order to be representative.

¹⁸⁷ Simone Abram, “‘Bias Binding’: Re-calling Creativity in Qualitative Research’, in *The Craft of Knowledge*, ed. by Carol Smart, Jenny Hockey, and Allison James (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 21-38 (p. 38).

¹⁸⁸ Jenny Hockey, Allison James, and Carol Smart, ‘Introduction’, in *The Craft of Knowledge*, ed. by Smart, Hockey, and James, pp. 1-18 (p. 13).

¹⁸⁹ Les Back, *New Ethnicities and Urban Cultures: Racisms and Multicultures in Young Lives* (London: UCL Press, 1996), p. 5, cf. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1989).

Ethnographers have long sought to debunk this sterile myth: writing in the early eighties, Hymes pragmatically highlighted ‘the small portion of cultural behaviour that people can be expected to report or describe, when asked, and the much smaller portion that an average person can be expected to manifest by doing on demand’, commenting sceptically, ‘some social research seems incredibly to assume that what there is to find out can be found out by asking’.¹⁹⁰ More recently, sociolinguists Jan Blommaert and Dong Jie, drawing on Hymes’ work, stated:

People are not cultural or linguistic catalogues, and most of what we see as their cultural or social behaviour is performed without reflecting upon it and without an active awareness that this is something they *do*. Consequently, it is not a thing they have an opinion about, nor an issue that can be comfortably put in words when you ask about it [...]. Asking is indeed very often the worst possible way of trying to find out.¹⁹¹

In reproducing these concerns, I am not trying to undermine the valuable work of broader sociological inquiries, merely to emphasize to the reader unfamiliar with ethnographic approaches that the realities sociological surveys represent are also constructed ones, dependent on the specific circumstances in which data collection was carried out, and the questions that were asked - which, as Hills de Zárte cautions, may not be the most useful ones.¹⁹² Even if it were possible to ascertain a ‘representative’ case, I would dispute the value of normative representation when the overall objective is, as in this case, to promote the value of critical reflection on everyday experience and expression. This is not to deny the wider meaning potentially contained within these very precise circumstances; rather, the ethnographic approach the thesis advocates rests on the anthropological commitment of keeping ‘in touch simultaneously with the extremes of universalism and particularism in modern life’.¹⁹³ This thesis – the report itself – is therefore an experiment not only in Modern Languages research and how it is done, but also in representation, in writing

¹⁹⁰ Dell Hymes, *In Vain I Tried to Tell You: Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 84.

¹⁹¹ Blommaert and Dong Jie, p. 3.

¹⁹² Margaret Hills de Zárte, ‘Voice of the Object: Art Psychotherapy and Translating Cultures’, unpublished paper presented at Methodology Workshop on Migration, Mobility and Transgenerational Identity: Borders, Race, Ethnicity and Migration Network, University of Warwick, 16 March 2016.

¹⁹³ Miller, p. 9.

strategies. Responding to Back and Hockey et al.'s call, I have endeavoured to create a research story that will draw on extended interview quotations, texts, media performances, description, images, and personal reflection. The narrative will begin in earnest in the following chapter, 'Nostalgia', but I will begin here with a prologue to explain my position.

Notes observing a discussion:

'I can't believe that when they go out with their friends, they speak Italian, come on! Really? You're telling me you don't speak Neapolitan when you go out for a pizza on a Saturday night?' Sals teased Mario, the son of a friend. It was the end of August, one of those evenings where you can feel the curve down towards the rientro; school, work, looming city life. Talk was punctuated by sips of local liquor and card games. I was listening with increasing interest to their conversation and its threat of heated tones. Friends of Sals's family, a Neapolitan couple Francescù and Bianca had become concerned at the amount of Neapolitan dialect their sons, Mario and Giuseppe, were speaking after the family had returned from a camping holiday on the coast near their hometown. Sals's mother Margherita, a retired primary school teacher who moved at a young age from Bologna to Abruzzo and subsequently Molise, joined the conversation. 'But it is part of their culture, it is the Neapolitan language!' she protested; 'I used to invite grandparents into school and encourage them to tell their stories to children in the various Molise dialects, it's part of their culture!'

Francescù and Bianca disagreed in union in that way some close couples do so that first glance the argument could have between them, but their increasingly raised voices were cutting into each other's sentences in support:

'I'm not against Neapolitan, obviously not, but there's Neapolitan and there's Neapolitan –'

'The thing is, on holiday, they have spent a lot of time with, how can I say, a certain type of Neapolitan, not in a bad way, they are good people, but they are different people –'

'What I mean is that there is Neapolitan by choice, as part of culture, in certain situations, and yes they should have that ability, to speak Neapolitan –'

'Of course they should! Papà, when he lived with us, he spoke to the boys in Neapolitan, and I was happy for that, it's a different kind of -'

'Then there are people that don't know otherwise, that is what I want to make them understand –'

The discussion continued, stretching out into dark, cool mountain sky. Mario and Giuseppe were left to play cards, Neapolitan songs sung, grandparents remembered, actresses and comics called in as evidence for either side, 'It's that type, I mean, that kind of vulgarity'; 'Now that is what I mean by a Neapolitan gentleman, that's why I say there is Neapolitan and there is Neapolitan'.

After they leave, Margherita commented to Sals, 'I can't understand it, it's a beautiful language. Why wouldn't you want your children to speak it?' And then, 'What was Bianca's father anyway? For sure, there's no noble ancestry on her side!'

This discussion happened mid-way through my research between my partner, 'Sals', and his family. It struck me at the time as interesting and, as I had just got in the habit of taking field notes (an odd practice I hadn't though necessary as I live full-time in the field, or, more accurately, had only recently began to think of my home as a research field, but which ultimately proved invaluable), I decided to note it down. It seems to me that the distinction drawn here between those who can adopt or shed a cultural identity at will – in this case, those who *can* speak dialect – and those who, in Bianca and Francescù's words, 'don't know otherwise', is a very pertinent one. I remember noticing too at the time that there seemed to be no contradiction, for my partner's mother (who can always 'retreat' into a locally-esteemed Bolognese identity), in upholding the folkloric connotations of dialect as desirable at the same time as she undermined Bianca's authority on account of this local rootedness. To be sure, the fact my partner is Italian, and has moved from the rural Centre-South of Italy to London, has influenced my perspective. But I think my interest in this

conversation goes beyond this relationship, began before it, and is seed from which this research stems.

Prior to starting my PhD, I spent several years in the region of Abruzzo as an English language teacher. Bordered by the Adriatic Sea to the east and the Apennine mountain range to the west, Abruzzo, together with Molise (formerly 'Abruzzi'), represented the historic confines of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. Ignazio Silone once described the mountains as the most assertive characters of Abruzzese life, suggesting 'la loro particolare conformazione spiega anche il paradosso maggiore della regione, che consiste in questo: l'Abruzzo, situato nell'Italia centrale, appartiene in realtà all'Italia meridionale' ('their particular formation also explains the greatest paradox of the region, being that Abruzzo, situated in central Italy, actually belongs to the South').¹⁹⁴ Seventy years later, Tuscans still insist Abruzzo is part of the South and its associated unfavourable socio-economic infrastructures (though Southern Italians will call it central, saying that the region lacks an instinctive meridional hospitality). When I lived there, I became used even to younger students drawing harsh comparisons between Abruzzo and 'civilized' northern cities they had not yet seen, gesticulating emphatically and asking, 'ma che ci fai in Abruzzo?', 'Chi te l'ha fatto fare?' ('but what are you doing in Abruzzo?', 'Who made you do it?'). Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna in particular were set in contraposition to Abruzzo so that articulations of regional identity, for me, took on an echo of the sense of 'remoteness' that Natalia Ginzburg describes in one of the few literary portraits of the region:

Quando la prima neve cominciava a cadere, una lenta tristezza s'impadroniva di noi. Era un esilio il nostro: la nostra città era lontana e lontani erano i libri, gli amici, le vicende varie e mutevoli di una vera esistenza. Accendevamo la nostra stufa verde, col lungo tube che attraversava il soffitto: ci si riuniva tutti nella stanza dove c'era la stufa, e lì si cucinava e si mangiava, mio marito scriveva al grande tavolo ovale, i bambini cospargevano di giocattoli il pavimento. Sul soffitto della stanza era dipinta un'aquila: e io guardavo l'aquila e pensavo che quello era l'esilio. L'esilio era l'aquila, era la stufa verde che ronzava, era la vasta e silenzioso campagna e l'immobile neve. Alle cinque suonavano le

¹⁹⁴ Ignazio Silone, 'L'Abruzzo', in *Abruzzo e Molise* (Milan: Touring Club Italiano, 1948), p. 8.

campane della chiesa di Santa Maria, e le donne andavano alla benedizione, coi loro scialli neri e il viso rosso.¹⁹⁵

(When the first snow started to fall, a slow sadness took over us. We were in exile: our city was far away, and far away were the books, friends, and variable events of a real life. We lit our green stove with its flue pipe that crossed the ceiling: we all gathered in the room where the stove was, and we cooked and ate there, my husband wrote at the big oval table, the children strewed their toys over the floor. On the ceiling of the room someone had painted an eagle, and I used to look at the eagle and think, this is exile. Exile was that eagle, the hum of the green stove, the vast and silent countryside and the still snow. At five o'clock the church bells rang and the ruddy-faced women went to mass in their black shawls.)

Many of the adult students I worked with came from the surrounding countryside to Pescara, the provincial capital, to attend English lessons with a view to move either to the North of Italy or abroad and improve their employment prospects. A regional government initiative to fund language learning, coupled with the sale or closure of multinational companies key to the local economy, resulted in the absurd situation of employees attending numerous hours of private English tuition in lieu of a salary or redundancy pay. I saw many of these students for one-to-one lessons several times a week and through discussions that arose in these sessions, I became interested in their articulation of strong affective relationships to the physical landscape of the region - and of course the people that inhabit it - alongside raging frustration at what they described as a debilitating 'local mentality'. 'Quà così si fa' ('that's what happens here') was both a depressed resignation, a response to my disbelief at their experiences of corruption, and a statement of pride. 'That's what happens here', or 'that's just what we do', so they shrugged off my gratitude at the labour behind food gifts, or were amused by my excitement at the collective preparation and celebration of the *vendemmia*, the autumn wine harvest.

The course of this research has been an opportunity to return to some of the questions raised by my experience in Abruzzo and encapsulated in the conversation

¹⁹⁵ Natalia Ginzburg, *Le piccole virtù* (Turin: Einaudi, 1962), p. 6.

noted down between Sals and his family; to probe more closely into the meaning of authenticity, of nostalgia for traditional pasts, of the value articulated and claimed in these subtle processes. Through the sites, texts, figures and narratives identified – ostensibly very disparate experiences of Italian mobility – the tension between the desirability of a grounded, local identity and the simultaneous need to be able to distance oneself from it, generational class difference and its enduring memory, the diversity of rural and urban experience, self-understanding and expression, can be traced in quotidian micro-practices that inform a sense of self.

v. Chapter outline

The thesis begins by drawing out the implications of ‘nostalgia’, both in the primary Italian sense of homesickness, and in the idealization of the past enacted by images of traditional Italy that circulate in England: Chapter II will focus on how Italy is understood as an ‘elsewhere’ that is both geographical and temporal in a café in London’s historic Italian quarter, Terroni, and Simonetta Agnello Hornby’s novel *Il pranzo di Mosè*, before concluding with some reflections on a personal narrative arising from the site, that of Val.

Chapter III, ‘Heritage’, continues the inquiry into the value of the past by examining the personal narratives of Val and Silvestro. Outlining parallels between a sense of ‘being Italian’ as it is ‘received’ in stories recounted to me in interview and ethnographic approaches to gift exchange, I read heritage as a gift in order to scrutinize its implications for giver and recipient. This chapter is especially interested in the way elements of working-class Southern Italian heritage have consumer appeal. Here, I argue for the need to develop empathetic ways of conceptualizing heritage which recognize the familial past as a strong site of affect, but also allow space for a critical questioning of the tension between distance and proximity that marks these heritage claims.

In Chapter IV, ‘Authenticity’, I indicate some of the practical, present-day implications of the Italies invoked thus far via a study of SharedCity’s ‘Little Italy’ tour and TV chef and celebrity personality Gino D’Acampo. Focusing on the appeal of authentic Italian cuisine and related performances, I probe further into the relationship between

authenticity and self-making, positing that the appeal of the authentic may be more accurately linked to a human need to feel part of a community.

The interest in terminology which spans the first three chapters is fully indulged in Chapter V, 'Words', which looks at language as an everyday site of encounter. This chapter explores how value is contested in the language games, and visual and sensory puns of operated by the informal restaurant and bar Fud in Palermo. It draws on contemporary sociolinguistic theory, in particular the concept of translanguaging, and explores how an ethnographic sensitivity to language can be brought into the classroom via collaborative translation.

Through these chapters I hope to offer the reader three things: firstly, an introduction to contemporary quotidian spaces and everyday practice as meaningful sites of disciplinary inquiry and to helpful theoretical approaches to such material; secondly, a critical perspective on the questions of self, value, and meaning that these sites raise; and thirdly, some practical reflections on the potential of the similarities of the processes of ethnography and language learning. In this sense, I would like the thesis to be read as an open invitation to dialogue; the concluding chapter will bring together the central themes of this research and offer some reflections on the limitations of this project with a view to generating future paths of inquiry.

II. Nostalgia

*This often fatal illness, has not been described by physicians, although it very much deserves to be. The German name indicates the pain which the sick person feels because he is not in his native land, or fears never to see it again. For this reason, because of the Swiss in France who are affected by this illness, the French call it *maladie du pays*. Since it has no Latin name, I have called it *nostalgia* (from ‘nostos’, return to one’s native land, and ‘algos’, pain or distress).*

Johannes Hofer, ‘Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia’, Basel, 1688.

*Travel, accept certain inalienable truths
Prices will rise, politicians will philander, you too will get old
And when you do, you’ll fantasize that when you were young
Prices were reasonable, politicians were noble
And children respected their elders
Respect your elders.*

*Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it
Advice is a form of nostalgia
Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal
Wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it is worth.*

Baz Luhrmann, ‘Everybody’s Free (To Wear Sunscreen)’, 1999.

It might seem a strange choice to begin a study of the consumption of Italy with a seventeenth-century pathology of nostalgia as penned by a young Swiss medical student,¹⁹⁶ and an extract from a hypothetical graduation address written by an American columnist and popularised by an Australian nineties hit record.¹⁹⁷ In introducing this chapter with citations that stem from apparently unrelated time periods, geographical contexts, and texts, I would like to invite you to consider the

¹⁹⁶ Johannes Hofer, ‘Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia’, Basel, 1688, trans. by Carolyn Kiser Anspach, in *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, vol. 2 (1934) 376-91 (p. 381).

¹⁹⁷ Baz Luhrmann, ‘Everybody’s Free (To Wear Sunscreen)’, 1999, based on the essay by columnist Mary Schmich, ‘Advice, like youth, probably just wasted on the young’, *Chicago Tribune*, June 1997.

wider relevance of the deconstruction of the specific manifestations of nostalgia that I will offer. The political upheavals at the time of writing marked by the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America, promising to ‘make America great *again*’, and the Brexit referendum vote to leave the European Union, premised at least in part upon the ‘romanticised days of Empire when Britannia ruled the waves’,¹⁹⁸ provide a timely reminder of the rhetorical and political power of nostalgia. Critical pursuit of the romanticised readings of pasts that gain broader social legitimisation, and reflection upon the types of identities and practices that they privilege in and across different times, contexts, and languages appears in such a moment particularly pressing. My contribution to this more extensive project is to examine some specific instances of personal and public constructions of Italy and the environment in which they develop. I will focus on the interpretation of Italy as a geographical and temporal ‘elsewhere’ in the physical site Terroni of Clerkenwell, a café and delicatessen in London’s historic Italian quarter, and in Simonetta Agnello Hornby’s culinary memoir, *Il pranzo di Mosè*.¹⁹⁹

My analysis is based on an understanding of ‘time’ and ‘space’ not as two distinct entities, but as indivisible concepts that mutually form and inform one another. ‘The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there’, states L.P. Hartley in the much-quoted opening to his novel *The Go-Between*,²⁰⁰ conflating the otherness of both the past and the foreign, and reminding us that our understanding of place is established in relation to our experience of time. And vice-versa; as anthropologist and archaeologist Lynn Meskell points out, the past is sanctified as such only by the ‘arbitrary passing’ of time which is *culturally* determined.²⁰¹ In practical terms, an exemplary case is the synchronisation of time that underpins global society today. It is perhaps easy to forget that the imagined universality of ‘time’ in this sense is a relatively recent Western invention: it was only in 1880, with the advent of mass rail

¹⁹⁸ Nadine El-Enany, ‘Brexit as Nostalgia for Empire’, *Critical Legal Thinking: Law and the Political*, 19th June 2016, online: <<http://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/06/19/brexit-nostalgia-empire/>> [accessed 7th December 2016].

¹⁹⁹ Simonetta Agnello Hornby, *Il pranzo di Mosè* (Florence and Milan: Giunti, November 2014); contemporarily broadcast as a seven-episode cookery series, ‘Il pranzo di Mosè’, *RealTime*, 11th September 2014 – 13th December 2014. <<http://www.realtimetv.it/programmi/il-pranzo-di-mose/>> [last accessed 4th January 2017].

²⁰⁰ L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953; Penguin, 2004), p. 5.

²⁰¹ Lynn Meskell, ‘Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology’, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75.3 (2002) 557-74 (p. 571).

travel, that the British government felt it necessary to legally establish a national time zone - much to the frustration of individual cities, towns, and villages who had previously proclaimed their own time!²⁰² Placing Schmich's framing of nostalgia as part of the human aging process alongside Hofer's medical definition is therefore also intended to highlight the inherently subjective nature of 'the past'; to set the tone for an inquiry which will focus on the interlocking of the personal with collective remembering of other times and places.

Nostalgia is 'a term which has come to be used dismissively to denote a form of memory constructed through selective reification of elements of the past', writes Jennifer Burns, stressing that the interplay between this type of idealized past and a more personal sense of loss is 'a productive one to examine'.²⁰³ I want to explore the relationship Burns identifies in light of the geographical dimension of Hofer's early pathology, reflected in the Italian word today which retains the meaning of 'homesickness'. I will scrutinize the nature of the memories stake in nostalgic reconstructions of Italy as elsewhere, paying close attention to the ideas of home and belonging they evoke: what is celebrated in the homeliness of these recreations of Italy? What is concealed? How do these souvenir-images relate to individual memory? As Burns points out regarding the 'memorialization of home' in migrant textual production, 'the very mechanism of turning a "lost place" into an imagined one exposes an ongoing exchange with home which maintains its presence and its changeability'.²⁰⁴ By setting a close reading of Agnello Hornby's text against the material space of Terroni and a personal narrative arising from this site, this chapter aims to reveal some of the meanings implicit in the appeal of reconstructed Italies which simultaneously commemorate and reinvigorate ideas of homeliness and security 'lost' as much through the passing of time as through migration.

Born in 1945 in Palermo (Sicily), Agnello Hornby is a naturalized British citizen and has spent most of her adult life in England. Her narratives can be studied as products born out of movement across and between nations and eras – quite literally, as the

²⁰² Ralph Harrington, 'Trains, Technology and Time Travel – How the Victorians Reinvented Time' <<https://web.archive.org/web/20080828054933/http://www.greycat.org/papers/timetrav.html>> [accessed 4th January 2017].

²⁰³ Jennifer Burns, *Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013), p. 67.

²⁰⁴ Burns, p. 103.

author explains in her acknowledgement to ‘British Airways’ in the novel, *La Mennulara*.²⁰⁵ Analysing Agnello Hornby’s texts alongside Terroni, a site which I will indicate as similarly transnational and transtemporal, the chapter addresses the common points of these material and textual recreations of Italy. The first part of the chapter examines how both Terroni and *Il pranzo di Mosè* can be understood as reconstructions of an Italy that is both temporally and spatially ‘elsewhere’, acknowledging the broader topography of homeliness and drawing out parallels with the appeal of Italy as ‘remedial’ culture for Victorian and Edwardian travellers. In the second section of the chapter, drawing particularly on Sara Ahmed’s arguments regarding happiness and feminist history, I focus on the gendered nature of homely reconstructions, balancing critique of what is obscured by the type of past reified by these sites with the recognition of feminine labour *Il pranzo di Mosè* offers. The final section takes inspiration from an oral narrative arising from the site of Terroni, that of Val Di Benedetto, to reflect upon how these souvenir-images are assembled within an individual life course and the function they perform. Terroni and Agnello Hornby’s texts are presented as case studies of the complex interconnection between selective romanticising of the past with personal memory, of the use-value of nostalgia within an individual life course.

i. The appeal of ‘elsewhere’ as another place and time: ritual and remedial culture in ‘Terroni of Clerkenwell’ and Simonetta Agnello Hornby’s *Il pranzo di Mosè*

Next to St. Peter’s Italian Church on Clerkenwell Road, marking the old threshold of London’s Italian quarter, ‘Terroni of Clerkenwell’ has historically offered both a meeting-place for Italians and a tangible encounter with Italian culture. According to the 1939 *Guida Generale Degli Italiani In Gran Bretagna*, this family-run ‘bottega del Clerkenwell’ (‘little grocer of Clerkenwell’) was, at the end of the nineteenth century, ‘il fulcro di ogni attività italiana’ (‘the hub of all Italian activity’) and the gateway from which Italian workers, products, and culture, swelled

²⁰⁵ Simonetta Agnello Hornby, *La Mennulara* (Milan: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editori, 2002).

dalle viuzze scoscese del Clerkenwell, invade gli altri quartieri ove gli inglesi cominciano ad avere i primi contatti coll'ambrato olio degli oliveti liguri, con i vini del Piemonte, con i prodotti della terra italiana.²⁰⁶

(out of the steep alleys of Clerkenwell and invaded other areas where the English began to have their first contact with the amber oil of Ligurian olive groves, with the wines of Piedmont, with the produce of the Italian earth).

Re-opened in 2012 (not by the Terroni family), this café emerged as a key site in my study in personal narratives and as a public space explicitly identifiable as 'Italian'. As we will see in Chapter IV, the visibility of Terroni makes it a public-facing marker of cultural authenticity, the meeting-point of SharedCity's walking tour of 'real' Italy. The misinterpretation of the name 'Terroni' itself as playful use of an Italian derogatory term for Southerners, something we will consider in Chapter V, is indicative of the multifold meanings contained within this site, some of which we will examine in this chapter.

My first visit to Terroni encapsulates the 'strange familiarity' that Maurizio Marinelli and Francesco Ricatti (following several scholars in the well-trodden path of interpreting Freudian notions of the uncanny), identify as key to understanding similar spaces fashioned by Italian migration to Australia.²⁰⁷ Present-day Clerkenwell is often referred to as London's design hub; as the base of many architects, graphic and interior designers, during the week its fashionable coffee shops and street food market, like Terroni, hum with the throng of creative industry professionals and local office workers rushing out on lunch breaks. On a Sunday afternoon, it was quiet and empty in comparison, with the stillness of the streets, some still cobbled, broken only by the clanging of traders packing up the clothes market. Terroni's misted windows spilled warm light out into the premature autumn dusk; stepping inside, to a ringing shop's bell, to bright regimented rows of De Cecco pasta packs and coffee served in

²⁰⁶ 'Terroni, Cav. Raffaele', *Anglo-Italian Family History Society*, online: <http://www.anglo-italianfhs.org.uk/transcriptions/terroni_raffaele.shtml> [accessed 4th January 2016].

²⁰⁷ Maurizio Marinelli and Francesco Ricatti, 'Emotional Geographies of the Uncanny: Reinterpreting Italian Transnational Spaces', *Cultural Studies Review* 19.3 (2013), 5-18, online: <<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/csrj/article/view/3496/3756>> [accessed 4 January 2015], p. 7.



Terroni of Clerkenwell, interior and exterior. I learned later that the black-and-white picture on the right (above the silver ice buckets) is of Val's grandfather in front of the shop.



chubby ceramic cups, bottles of Zaccagnini wine sealed with stubs of dried vine from the hills of Bolognano, vigorously articulate hands and exclaimed exchanges in Italian over the impassioned tones of Antonello Venditti, I had the strange impression that I was back in Abruzzo – albeit an Abruzzo further back in time than the one I knew. I have heard other customers similarly struck, and enchanted, by this aura of ‘pastness’; by the surprise discovery of a family-run grocery shop, as my co-researcher Mario commented, ‘come si trovava una volta’ (‘like you used to find’), the demise of which are often lamented as part and parcel of the urbanisation, globalization, consumerism and other various ills of contemporary society.



Traditional Italian branded products in Terroni.

The charm of images of Italy’s former way of life that is notable in the aesthetics of Terroni is explicitly commemorated in *Il pranzo di Mosè*, a culinary memoir of the author’s family country home near Agrigento:

Dovunque in Europa oggi si trova tutto e sempre; rimpiango la scomparsa della stagionalità nei mercati e la sua perdita nella dieta. Per settimane a Mosè si mangiano gli stessi prodotti, maturati tutti assieme; si conservano sotto sale, sott’olio, sotto aceto, e si elaborano, si cucinano, si surgelano.

Tutto a un tratto sulle piante non ce ne sono più. Altri prodotti prendono il loro posto. C'è un'antica bellezza nell'aspettare che inizi la stagione dei finocchi; è confortevole fare pentoloni di marmellata di albicocche pensando che basteranno per l'intero anno, e ha un non so che di sensuale fare scorpacciate di arance, e una panzata di fichi, sapendo che non ce ne saranno altri per più di otto mesi.²⁰⁸

(Anywhere in Europe now you find everything, all year round; I mourn the disappearance of the markets' seasons and its lost influence on how we eat. For weeks at Mosè you eat the same products which all come to fruit once; you preserve them with salt, oil, vinegar, and you work with them, you cook them, freeze them. All of a sudden, the plants don't bear fruit any more. Other things take their place. There is an ancient beauty in waiting for the start of the fennel season; it is comforting to make huge pots of apricot jam with the thought they will last an entire year, and there is a mysterious sensuality in feasting on oranges, and bingeing on figs, knowing that there will be no more for over eight months).

This extract is from a longer passage which opens with the explanation that, 'percorrendo le corsie dei supermercati mi accorgo che il ciclo delle stagioni è scomparso' ('browsing supermarket aisles, I realise that the seasons have disappeared'), and the contrast between the pleasures of the natural seasonal change of the Sicilian countryside of the author's childhood and the impersonality of supermarket aisles with the physical gratification of 'scorpacciate', ('feasting', 'bingeing') and 'una panzata' ('a bellyful'). The informal lexis choice can be seen to underscore the corporeality and simplicity of these delights. The repetition of the idea of 'loss' is here also striking. Agnello Hornby writes of grief – 'rimpiango', and 'la scomparsa', 'la perdita' ('the disappearance', 'the loss') of seasons – an emphasis which is echoed in the description of the seasonality of Mosè today, 'non ce ne sono più', 'non ce ne saranno altri' ('there are no more', 'there won't be any more'). Though echoing the language of 'mourning and reverence' that Burns, following Michel de Certeau, recognizes in the narratives of relationships between migrants and home,²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 54.

²⁰⁹ Burns, p. 102.

the loss Agnello Hornby describes is prompted not by enforced displacement, but through the passing of time and changing cultural habits: the author can and does regularly return to Mosè, but it is not *this* Mosè, as stressed by detailed portraits of how life at Mosè used to be. For example, introducing us to the daily routine of the Mosè of her childhood, Agnello Hornby writes:

Nell'aia spizzuliavano galline e pulcini; le corna a torciglione delle capre girgintane spuntavano alte dallo steccato della mandria. Mamma raccontava che Rosalia, la moglie di Luigi, il campiere, a cui lei e zia Teresa volevano molto bene, aveva offerto loro 'u caffè du parrinu e del pane ancora tiepido, cotto nel forno a legna.²¹⁰

(In the farmyard hens and chicks clucked and chirruped; the horns of a local herd of goats peeped over the picket fence. Mamma told us that Rosalia - Luigi the groundsman's wife - who she and auntie Teresa adored, had invited them for special 'u caffè du parrinu and fresh bread, still warm from the wood-fire oven.)

This passage is typical in its use of local expressions such as 'spizzuliavano' ('to cluck, chirrup, cheep' in Agrigento dialect) and 'girgintane' ('of Agrigento'). Together with the very specific tradition – or as Agnello Hornby defines it, 'ritual' of 'u caffè du parrinu', a point I will return to presently – the use throughout this text of language that is recognizable as provincial, even if its precise meaning may be misunderstood, works to refer the reader back to a specific place and time. In Italy, dialect expressions usually carry strong connotations of backwardness, and terms like 'il campiere' (an eighteenth-century Sicilian term similar to 'groundsman'; a farm-owner's 'right-hand man', who was usually unarmed and responsible primarily for protecting crop from theft and fire during the harvest) denote a way of life that has all but disappeared.

We can begin by noting the continuity between these particular romantic visions and what memory scholar Andreas Huyssen identifies as a wider nostalgia 'boom' present in affluent Western industrial societies.²¹¹ Observing images like these, Huyssen

²¹⁰ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 19.

²¹¹ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.5.

comments that ‘a desire for narratives of the past, for re-creations, re-readings, re-productions, seems boundless at every level of our culture’.²¹² The apparent abundance of these material performances of nostalgia - the textual, visual, and haptic recreation and display of an idea of ‘pastness’ (our own, or that of others) that *Il pranzo di Mosè* and Terroni’s exemplify – has attracted increasing scholarly interest in recent decades. Lucy Gallagher, for example, points to a revival of the aesthetics reminiscent of traditional English village fetes; of bunting and British monarchy memorabilia, and contemporary fashion for Emma Bridgewater pottery and Cath Kidston fabrics; home and kitchenware which recalls the past of rural ‘middle England’.²¹³ In the same vein, focussing on television, Amy Holdsworth delineates the increased currency of memory citing ‘the reinvention and resurrection of cult or canonical texts such as *Doctor Who* (BBC, 1963-89; 2005-) or *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006-7), the popularity of nostalgia programming (i.e. the clip show or list TV) and the scheduling of retrospective seasons (on BBC Four, for example), the phenomenal growth of the TV DVD market and the development of online television’.²¹⁴ Similarly, at the time of writing a variety of different ethnic cuisines and food habits in Britain, including those products which are understood as ‘traditionally British’ are a subject of popular attention. A typical example is Nigel Slater’s *Eating for England* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007), in which British idiosyncrasies at the table such as custard cream biscuits and Marmite spread are nostalgically celebrated.²¹⁵

In practical terms, just a short walk from Terroni, the aesthetics of the self-proclaimed Italian coffee shop chain ‘Caffè Nero’ – its use of chalk-board menus and sepia-toned scenes of a bucolic Italy – and the exhibition of food ware for purchase in a branch of ‘Carluccio’s’ restaurant – jam jars with mock hand-written labels, tins of olive oil, sweets and biscuits packaged in papers stamped with iconic ‘traditionally Italian’ brands laid out over rustic wooden boards – now camouflage the particularity of Terroni’s ‘pastness’, and bear testimony to the lucrative market power of nostalgia.

²¹² Huyssen, p. 5.

²¹³ Lucy Gallagher, ‘The Contemporary Middlebrow Novel: (Post)feminism, Class and Domesticity’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2011).

²¹⁴ Amy Holdsworth, *Television, Memory and Nostalgia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 5.

²¹⁵ For an analysis of meanings attached to ethnic cuisines other than those understood as ‘traditionally’ British within Britain, see Mark Thorpe, ‘Eating into Britishness’, in *Practising Identities: Power and Resistance*, ed. by Sasha Roseneil and Julie Seymour (Basingstoke: Macmillian Press, 1999), pp.223-48.

Today's industrial-scale recreations of the displays of greengrocers and delicatessens in Italy 'com'era' (Italy 'as was') have been described by Ecker as part of a 'powerful mythmaking about Italianità' tied up with nostalgia.²¹⁶ Citing the example of celebrity chef and restaurateur Jamie Oliver (as one among many), Ecker highlights that the nostalgic idealization of rural pasts and traditional communities which characterizes English readings of Italian culture 'powerfully corresponds to Italian auto-stereotypes distributed in great quantity and best visual quality by local tourism boards'.²¹⁷

For Huyssen, this 'yearning for remembering' and returning to the past arises from the need for a more secure positioning when confronted with an indefinite future; the response to an 'informational and perceptual overload combined with a cultural acceleration that neither our psyche nor our senses are adequately equipped to handle'.²¹⁸ My perspective is slightly different; I am interested in how the security foregrounded in these romanticised pasts might relate to the individual meaning-making processes within the life course, and gendered visions of the home, rather than technological progression proper to the current period. Indeed, though Huyssen does acknowledge that 'new technologies of transportation and communication have always transformed the human perception of time and space in modernity' (citing the examples of the development of the railways, telephone, radio, and aeroplane),²¹⁹ I think there is an over-emphasis on the *exceptionality* of today's predilection for nostalgic creations; let us pause for a moment to contemplate instead the similarities between the haptic record of rural Sicilian life Agnello Hornby effects in *Il pranzo di Mosè*, the appeal of the unexpected homeliness of Terroni, and earlier representations of Italy as 'remedial' culture.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Ecker, 'Zuppa Inglese and Eating up Italy', in *Performing National Identity* ed. by Pfister and Hertel, pp. 307-22 (p. 34).

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²¹⁸ Huyssen, p. 25, cf. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²²⁰ Ralph Pordzik, *The Wonder of Travel: Fiction, Tourism and the Social Construction of the Nostalgic* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH, 2005), p. 10.



Terroni pasta selection.

Stephanie Malia Hom claims that Italy lends itself to commodification as an imagined community more so than other geographies because its identity as a modern nation was shaped at the same moment as its identity as a destination for mass tourism.²²¹ Indeed, since the era of the Grand Tour, Italy has been repeatedly recognised by travellers and writers as a ‘useful and necessary’ point of reference, an ‘other’ through which a sense of British identity has been developed.²²² ‘Motivated by this sense or nostalgia for a taintless, unaltered reality and their propensity to look “elsewhere” for visible signs of cultural authenticity’, Ralph Pordzik explains, already for Victorian and Edwardian travellers, it was

The quest for new pleasures, fresh images, simpler lifestyles and, last but not least, relief from the ills of metropolitan culture compelled them to

²²¹ Stephanie Malia Hom, ‘Italy without borders: Simulacra, tourism, suburbia and the new grand tour’, *Italian Studies*, 65.3 (2010), 367–97 (p. 377).

²²² Pordzik, p. 10, cf. *Performing National Identity*, ed. by Pfister and Ralf (New York: Rodopi, 2008), and Giacomo Comiati, Martina Piperno and Kate Willman, ‘Italy Made in Britain’, *Modern Languages Open* (forthcoming).

move further and further into what they perceived to be the margins of the world'.²²³

A century later, Pordzik's identification of Italy as a curative counterbalance to the evils of modern culture seems to explain well the charm of the aura of pastness that Terroni and *Il pranzo di Mosè* emanate (and that Terroni's contemporary competitors actively seek to cultivate) today. It is also worth highlighting that, in an era of global travel and media connectivity, 'the margins of the world' may be conceived in both temporal and spatial terms; for Agnello Hornby, it is in the 'lost' rituals of her farmhouse summers that, confronted with the 'ills' of today's metropolitan culture, that comfort can be sought.

Ritual, a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order, can be understood as simultaneously as the enactment of nostalgia (commemorating what is absent), and its antidote – again, as Burns suggests, the means by which 'home' can be brought into a present space.²²⁴ Accordingly, the significance of food in diasporic communities has been described in terms of ritual by anthropologists like David E. Sutton, who distinguishes 'an imagined community implied in the act of eating food "from home"', in that 'integrity [of geography] is restored through a remembered coherence, or structural repetition between domains'.²²⁵ The consumption of ethnic foods, Sutton suggests, conjures a 'whole world of family, agricultural associations, place names and other "local knowledge"'.²²⁶ In the same way, Tulasi Srinivas, in her study of the diasporic South Indian community in Boston, suggests that 'the act of eating is transformed into a performance of "gastro-nostalgia" that attempts to create a cultural utopia of ethnic Indian-ness'.²²⁷ Food rituals create continuity with imagined communities – the communities of elsewhere – and are thus explicitly linked with the idea of belonging. In this sense, Terroni

²²³ Pordzik, p.10. Pordzik uses the examples of Amelia Edwards, E.M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, and Robert Byron.

²²⁴ Burns p. 102 cf. de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech and Other Political Writings*, ed. by Luce Giard, trans. and afterword by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 171.

²²⁵ David E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), p. 83.

²²⁶ Sutton, p. 83.

²²⁷ Tulasi Srinivas, 'As Mother Made It', in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 355-75 (p. 356).

stessi che vengono coltivati nel territorio fin dal IX secolo' ('the products that we grow on the farm are more or less the same as those that have been grown on the Island since the ninth century'),²²⁸ as well as in her culinary and dining habits: 'in Inghilterra continuo a cucinare esattamente come ho imparato in Sicilia, anche se non era facile agli inizi' ('in England, I continue to cook in exactly the same way I learned in Sicily, even if it wasn't easy in the beginning'); 'ho mantenuto le usanze siciliane nell'apparecchiare la tavola, nel servire il cibo e nel badare agli ospiti' ('I have kept up the Sicilian ways of setting the table, serving food and taking care of guests').²²⁹ The ritual of setting the table is one that anticipates a social event, and even the apparent triviality of the author's professed aversion to table mats is explained in terms of community; 'dare a ciascun commensale una zona così delimitata è contrario al principio della convivialità' ('giving each guest such a limited zone runs contrary to the principle of conviviality'), she explains, 'è come se ciascun commensale mangiasse in un tavolo tutto suo in un ristorante, accanto a estranei' ('it's as if every guest were eating on their own little table in a restaurant, next to strangers').²³⁰ The recurrence of the word *commensale* itself is significant. I have favoured the translation of 'guest' to reflect the overall style of the text and home environment it describes (rather than the more formal English 'commensal' or 'fellow diner') but in Italian, stemming from the medieval Latin words for 'with' and 'measure', the term emphasizes sharing a table and 'togetherness' as much as it does the act of eating. The text exalts the table, in particular the table of Mosè, as symbolic of ritual and community, the promise of the security of the family home. This is precisely the rhetoric capitalized upon by the media campaigns and product packaging choice of brands like 'Il Mulino Bianco',²³¹ whose images of wholesome families enjoying life in sun-drenched rural cottages are stacked up on the shelves of Terroni.

²²⁸ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 29.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²³¹ For a specific analysis of 'Il Mulino Bianco' in the context of branding strategies and food consumption habits in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s, see Federico Chiaricati, 'Economia e cultura dei consumi alimentari degli anni Ottanta', *Storia e Futuro* 27 (2011), online: <<http://storiaefuturo.eu/economia-e-cultura-dei-consumi-alimentari-degli-anni-ottanta-le-fonti/>> [accessed 7 September 2017].

ii. Homeliness and happiness: nostalgia and domestic labour

‘In the absence of “old-time” kitchens, their inhabitants, and the social relations of these domestic landscapes, the products acquired within economies of the “antique” provide comforting references’, writes Jean Duruz of the desirability of vintage-style commodities, affirming the appeal of Terroni’s stock and ambience, as well as the scene recounted of Mosè, in terms of homeliness and security.²³² Yet, she goes on to caution, ‘as with those niggling fears about time-space compression, one needs to question whose remembering is at stake when one is mourning the woman at the wood stove or purchasing her symbolic products’.²³³ With this query, Duruz indicates how the appeal of such images conceals as much they celebrate. Accordingly, I would now like to look more closely at the role assigned to women in the sentimental recollections of *Il pranzo di Mosè*. In particular, I will examine the labour behind the creation of these happy scenes, questioning how far the ‘iconic figure of country woman, carrying out the rituals of the day or season’,²³⁴ becomes just that; an icon, a representative symbol or sign, significant only in as much as the signifier of the security and happiness of others.

The concept of the ‘feminist killjoy’ that sociologist Sara Ahmed has developed in response to, and rejection of, the enforced responsibility for the happiness of others, is useful here. For Ahmed, the feminist killjoy is the figure that points out problems and exposes contradictions to supposedly public joy. In doing so, the feminist killjoy becomes positioned as the cause of unhappiness (‘you cause unhappiness by revealing the causes of unhappiness’).²³⁵ Ahmed opposes the necessity of happiness ‘as an exclusion not just of unhappiness but of possibility’, on the grounds that unhappiness is always possible.²³⁶ She explains:

Happiness involves both reciprocal forms of aspiration (I am happy for you, I want you to be happy, I am happy if you are happy) and forms of

²³² Jean Duruz, ‘Home Cooking, Nostalgia, and the Purchase of Tradition’, *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, 12.2 (2001), 21-32 (p. 24).

²³³ Ibid., p. 24.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

²³⁵ Sara Ahmed, ‘Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness’, *Signs*, 35.3 (2010), 571-94 (p. 582 and p. 591).

²³⁶ Ahmed, p. 591.

coercion that are exercised and concealed by the very language of reciprocity, such that one person's happiness is not only made conditional on another person's happiness but on the willingness to be made happy by the same things.²³⁷

The mechanism Ahmed identifies resonates clearly with the role assigned to women as Agnello Hornby describes it in *Il pranzo di Mosè*. The author explains:

Il compito delle donne di famiglia era di badare al marito e ai figli, di essere brave padrone di casa e, quando si ricevevano visite, di occuparsi della felicità dell'ospite, dal momento in cui costui arrivava fino al commiato.²³⁸

(The role of the women of the family was to look after their husband and children, to be good housekeepers and, when guests came, to take responsibility for their happiness, from the moment of their arrival up until they left.)

By applying Ahmed's critique of happiness to *Il pranzo di Mosè*, we can recognise how the sense of security promoted by the text is one that depends on the public effacement of the specific subjecthood of the host in favour of her symbolic homeliness; the host is a happy figure, because she *makes* her happiness dependent on the happiness of the community she serves. Hers is the duty of effacing the contradictions that threaten to shatter an imagined community happiness; of silencing and self-silencing. Agnello Hornby's pride as a young child in 'playing host' by remaining the tacit witness of a lively table discussion alludes to the significance of this self-effacement:

Avrebbero potuto evitare l'intera discussione se avessero chiesto fin dall'inizio che c'era in cucina; inoltre Raimondo aveva ragione: le melanzane a quaglia devono essere piccine. Non lo dissi perché avrei potuto sciupare il divertimento e, forse, la parvenza di riavvicinamento tra

²³⁷ Ahmed, p. 580.

²³⁸ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 28.

marito e moglie: era noto che Raimondo aveva un'altra famiglia nascosta chissà dove.²³⁹

(They could have avoided the whole argument if they'd asked at the beginning what there actually was in the kitchen; and Raimondo was right; you need little aubergines to make *melanzane a quaglia*. I didn't say anything because it would have ruined the fun and, perhaps, the hint of reconciliation between husband and wife: it was an open secret that Raimondo had another family hidden who knows where).

'Non lo dissi', 'I didn't say anything': the young protagonist is a good host because she knows not to reveal a truth which would threaten the precarious happiness of the home. In this way, we can read the security promised by the culinary rituals recorded in *Il pranzo di Mosè* and interpreted in the type of past that Terroni offers up in material display as reliant on a hierarchy of happiness, because they rest on the suppression of contradiction to the perception of the happiness of the group situated at the top of that hierarchy. Though on the one hand we can read the nostalgia associated with these visions as one that upholds elsewhere as space of belonging - what is lost, through the passing of time or in the movement from one place to another, is the security of position in a community - the myth of the happiness of this secure community of belonging is also one that effaces the personal sacrifice behind their creation. Nostalgia therefore obscures the uncomfortable notion that happiness can be coercion, that the veneer of a smiling community is preserved by the sacrifice of the happiness - and the subjectivity - of others.

Whilst the example of Simonetta's silence is a trivial one, it is indicative of the coercive force of happiness. Olive Besagni's collection of oral histories, *A Better Life* - as discussed in the previous chapter, significant in that it is the primary reference point for the history of Italians in London - illustrates the more destructive consequences of happiness as oppression of selfhood. Besagni introduces this collection of personal stories and photographs with an explanation of the evolution of the Italian community from the early nineteenth century, detailing the construction of the Church, the annual procession for Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and the impact

²³⁹ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 47.

of two World Wars. She stresses the spirit of community in both daily life and in times of grave adversity. In the section, 'A Better Life', she describes the improvements the area underwent from the 1930s onwards, the increasing respectability enjoyed by the Italians and the sociality of their culture, acknowledging the difference in attitude towards gender as follows:

The boys would go quite far afield for their dancing, to Covent Garden, the Paramount in Tottenham Court Road or Beale's in Holloway Road. The girls were allowed much less licence. A very close watch was kept on them to maintain their respectability (i.e. virginity). If a young girl became pregnant, whether or not with her consent (lodgers in the house would sometimes take advantage of an innocent daughter of the household) the family shame would be such that they would disown the daughter or send her back to Italy. The only way out was a shotgun wedding. As a result, many girls entered into unhappy marriages, but generally they would endure it. Once married, the family would accept them again.²⁴⁰

The literal parenthesizing of sexual abuse and rape within the collective narrative of triumph of the Italian community hints at the power of nostalgia to disguise the very shadows it casts. In nostalgic visions, the community of 'elsewhere' is romanticised as a collective in which each person has their place, and is happy in it. The few lines Besagni dedicates to this trauma, together with the principle of the acceptance of the girls' pregnancies only in the context of a forced, *unhappy* marriage once again hints at this happiness hierarchy. And fitting neighbour of the site of these unhappy unions, we find another young girl who bears out the contrast between the selective reification of the past and the opacities this process creates. The bright blue-and-yellow De Cecco pasta plaque on the exterior wall of Terroni features a Southern Italian peasant girl. Arms brimming with a plentiful corn harvest, and suggestively rosy-cheeked in a provocatively gaping blouse, she exemplifies Duruz's iconic country woman. If, on closer inspection, there seems to be a trace of weariness in her expression, it only serves to reinforce the implicit coercive power of happiness: a visual testament to the labour and sacrifice obscured by nostalgia

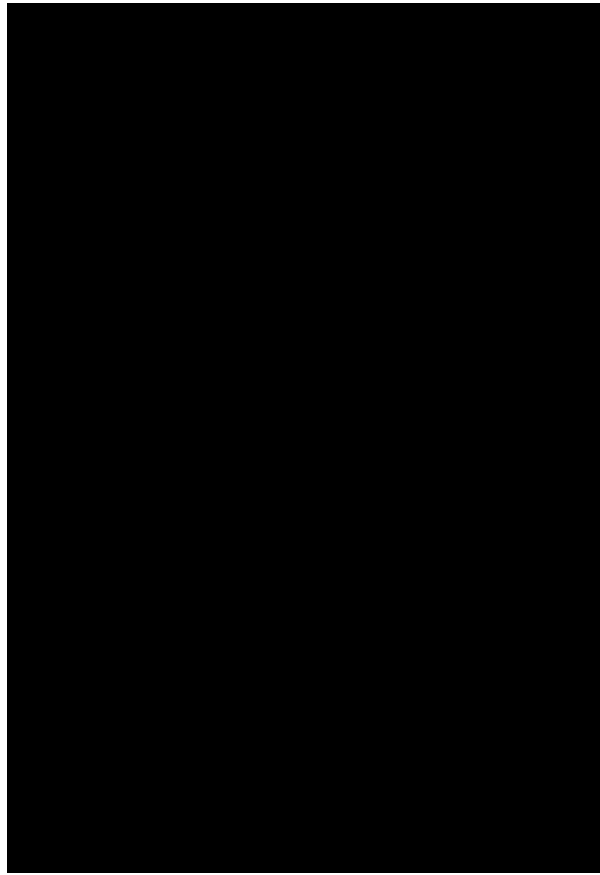
²⁴⁰ Besagni, p. 24.



De Cecco Pasta sign outside Terroni.

There is a prominent contrast between this image and the paratext of *Il pranzo di Mosè*, however, which requests further attention. The cover of *Il pranzo di Mosè* features a full-cover close-up of the slightly sullen black-and-white formal portrait of an elegant young woman; ‘Elena Giudice, madre di Simonetta e Chiara Agnello’ (‘Elena Giudice: mother of Simonetta and Chiara Agnello’) – not quite the happy, anonymous symbol of domesticity that we might expect. Turning the first page, we find the hand-written recipe notes that we learn are from the notebook of Agnello Hornby’s maternal grandmother, Nonna Maria. Portraits of family members from various periods up until the present day appear throughout, including reproductions from scenes of the book’s corresponding television series.²⁴¹ Agnello Hornby fuses past and present, public and private: the memories of the rituals of Mosè are interleaved in her London life, and the jottings of her grandmother’s recipe book are available in bookshops internationally. This is not a ‘lost’ anonymous past, then, but one very much present, which contains the possibility of a more constructive interpretation of the nostalgic home as a gendered space.

²⁴¹ ‘Il pranzo di Mosè’, *RealTime*, 11 September 2014 – 13 December 2014.
<<http://www.realtimetv.it/programmi/il-pranzo-di-mose/>> [last accessed 4th January 2017].



Front Cover of Il pranzo di Mosè. Image source: <<http://www.giunti.it/libri/narrativa/il-pranzo-di-mose/>>.

Scholarship from a variety of disciplines has highlighted modernity's association of the private and the home with the feminine and the public and the global with the masculine.²⁴² Sharon Haar and Christopher Reed cite the examples of Gaston Bachelard and Emmanuel Levinas as exemplary of phenomenological discourse on the home in which the 'perspective on the relations of domesticity, dwelling, childhood and memory is "the prerogative of men, positioned as the beneficiaries of domestic nurturance"'.²⁴³ In offering a sentimental reconstruction of homely environments which foregrounds feminine subjectivity, we might read Agnello Hornby's texts as contributions to a broader recognition of home as site of both work and satisfaction. Such an understanding is privileged in the fifth chapter of *Il pranzo di Mosè*, pointedly titled 'Mentre lavoro in cucina' ('As I work in the kitchen'), in which

²⁴² See David Morley, 'The Gender of Home', *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 56-85 for a comprehensive review of scholarship on the home as a gendered space.

²⁴³ Sharon Haar and Christopher Reed, 'Coming Home: A Postscript on Postmodernism', in *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, ed. by Christopher Reed (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), pp. 253-73 (p. 258), cited in Morley, p. 59.

Agnello Hornby compares the time-consuming preparation of *melanzane alla parmigiana* to the work of modern artists, 'dispongo le fette fritte a disegni geometrici, a zigzag, a spina di pesce, verso la salsa di pomodoro come stendessi pennellate di tempera' ('I arrange the fried slices of aubergine in geometric patterns, as a zigzag, or in a herringbone shape, I add the tomato sauce in brushstrokes, as if it were tempera').²⁴⁴ 'Il lavoro umile' ('the humble task') of cleaning vegetables may be a social moment when shared with friends,²⁴⁵ or an opportunity for reflection: 'compiango coloro che non cucinano e che non sanno cucinare. Perdono piaceri e occasioni di riflessione molto belle' ('I feel sorry for people who don't cook and don't know how to cook. They miss out on beautiful pleasures and moments of contemplation').²⁴⁶

Let me return to the ritual of *caffè d'u parrinu* to expand upon this depiction of the home as a site of toil and pleasure. A recurring motif in Agnello Hornby's texts, as mentioned previously, the special *caffè d'u parrinu* is stressed as a ritual which 'legava le donne della famiglia di mamma a quelle della famiglia di Rosalia, che da sette generazioni abitava a Mosè,' (bound together the women of Mamma's family and those of Rosalia's, who had lived at Mosè for seven generations').²⁴⁷ It is an explicitly feminine tradition through which care and provision for kin is emphasized simultaneously as skilled labour and a source of gratification. A case in point is the admiring wonder with which Rosalia is described when, in *Un filo d'olio*, the author recounts eventually daring to ask her for the recipe for *caffè d'u parrinu*:

Le labbra ormai sottili increspate dallo stesso sorriso limpido, e tuttora bella, Rosalia non disse né sì, né no. Mi elencò i sette ingredienti e spiegò che il caffè d'u parrinu, fatto come si doveva, richiedeva una lunga preparazione, ribollitura, 'e poi deve arripusari'. Non mi diede la ricetta, ma per il resto del mio soggiorno a Mosè me ne portò una caffettiera intera a metà mattina, ogni giorno. Ricetta niente. Sua figlia Antonia mi disse anni dopo che la madre, benché avida lettrice di libri e riviste di argomento religioso, scriveva di rado: tutte le sue ricette le sapeva a

²⁴⁴ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 52.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-52.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²⁴⁷ *Un filo d'olio*, p. 31.

memoria e temeva di non riuscire a scriverle per bene. Antonia e, ora, Chiara lo preparano esattamente come lei. Ma il loro caffè d'u parrinu, benché ottimo, non è la stessa cosa – manca il tocco magico di Rosalia.²⁴⁸

(Her lips, by that time thinned, were pursed by the same clear smile and, still beautiful, Rosalia said neither yes nor no. She listed the seven ingredients and explained that *caffè d'u parrinu*, made properly, required a lengthy preparation process, boiling, and then had to 'settle a wee while'. She did not give me the recipe, but for the rest of my stay at Mosè she brought me a full coffee-pot mid-morning, every day. No recipe. Her daughter Antonia told me years later that her mother, though an avid reader of books and magazines on religion, rarely wrote: she knew all her recipes by heart and was afraid of not being able to write them accurately. Antonia and now, Chiara, prepare *caffè d'u parrinu* in exactly the same way she did. But theirs, though excellent, is not quite the same thing – it lacks Rosalia's magic touch).

This passage makes clear how Agnello Hornby's culinary memoirs inscribe the effort and skill of the practical tasks of homemaking, but also the possibility of deriving meaning therein; a use-value of traditional practices. The concept of 'kin work' that Micaela di Leonardo uses in her ethnography of Italian-American families is useful here. Mapping the significance of kin ties in terms of social capital,²⁴⁹ di Leonardo rejects readings of the 'conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration' of kinship as a superficial activity, suggesting that:

Maintaining these contacts, this sense of family, takes time, intention, and skill. We tend to think of human social and kin networks as the epiphenomena of production and reproduction: the social traces created by our material lives. Or, in the neoclassical tradition, we see them as part of leisure activities, outside an economic purview except insofar as they involve consumption behaviour. But the creation and maintenance of kin

²⁴⁸ *Un filo d'olio*, p. 32.

²⁴⁹ Micaela di Leonardo, 'The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship', *Signs*, 12.3 (1987) 440-53.

and quasi-kin networks in advanced industrial societies is *work*; and moreover, it is largely women's work.²⁵⁰

Without underestimating the 'happiness hierarchy' discussed previously, a failure to recognise these tasks as both labour *and* a source of pleasure merely reinforces the position of women as signifiers and agents of the happiness and opportunities of others, rather than as subjects capable of producing (and entitled to) gratification in their own right. Building on di Leonardo's findings, Terry Lovell has argued for recognition of the domestic domain as 'not only an area in which unpaid labour must be undertaken, but also a realm in which one may attempt to gain human satisfactions – and power – not available in the labour market'.²⁵¹ Agnello Hornby's culinary memoirs, as narratives centred around such kin work, thus perform an important function by presenting the home concurrently as a place of labour through which quotidian meaning and pleasure is derived. In this sense, *Il pranzo di Mosè* may be most productively read in the context of a renewed understanding of working-class femininity as a text which creates space for reflection on the practicalities, and celebration of the significance, of work in the home.

iii. 'What you don't realise is that that man in the white coat at the front is my grandad!': memory in the life course, the narrative of Val Di Benedetto, and happiness as possibility

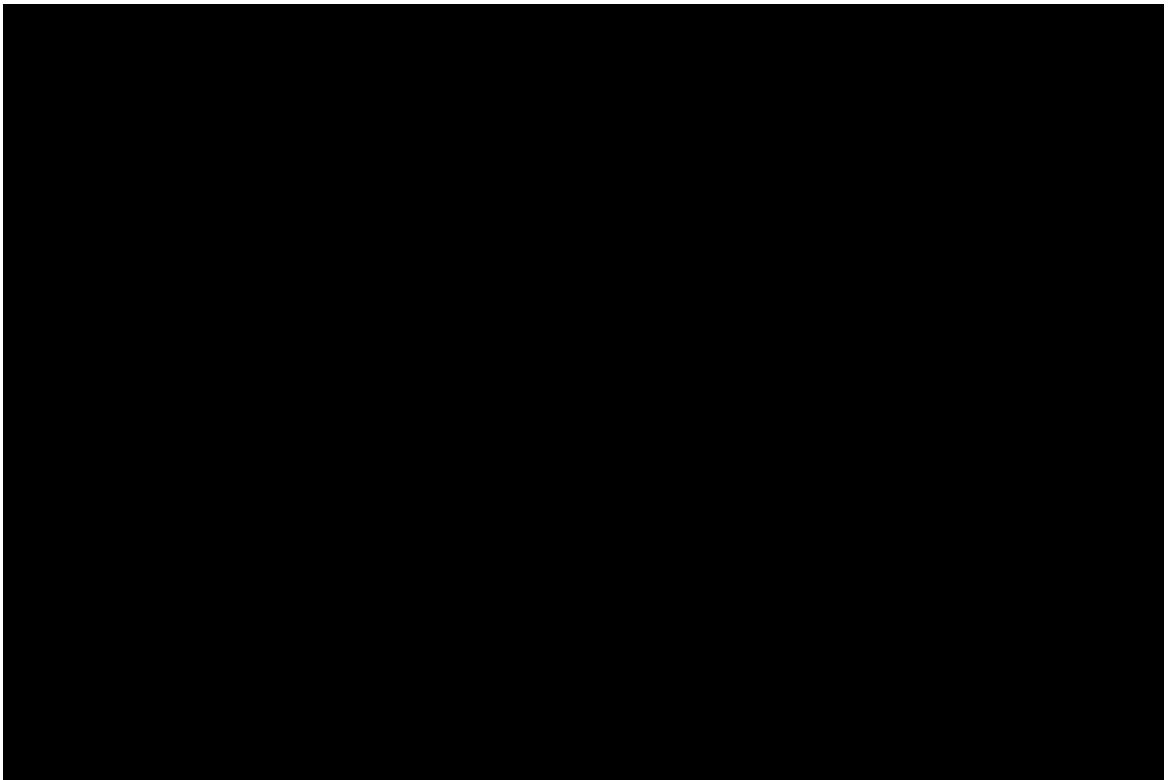
In this final section of the chapter, I want to focus on the investment in nostalgic visions and the recreation of home within the individual life course. Up to this point, I have considered Terroni as a material reconstruction of Italy, a space identifiable as 'Italian', indicating its appeal in terms of the imagined community projected therein and enacted through the consumption of its products. But one personal narrative of the site provides a very apt example of how individual memory and the collective remediation of nostalgic images are inextricably related in surprising ways. The interview Val Di Benedetto granted me in Terroni invited me to consider how it might be more productive to relate nostalgic recreations to individual experience of the life

²⁵⁰ di Leonardo, p. 442.

²⁵¹ Terry Lovell, 'Thinking feminism with and against Bourdieu', in *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture*, ed. by Bridget Fowler (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) pp. 27-48 (p. 41), via reference to di Leonardo, 1987.

course rather than read them exclusively through a gendered lens, or ascribe them to a wider nostalgia ‘boom’ in the industrialised Western world.

In December 2015 I interviewed Val together with photographer Mario Badagliacca. I was interested to hear about Val’s experience of growing up in London in an Anglo-Italian family in the 1950s and 1960s. The choice of Terroni as the site for interview was on the whole for practical reasons: though Mario and I felt it would be interesting to interview Val in the same premises that her grandfather had worked, it was also a convenient mid-point (Val had kindly travelled down for the day) which would be quiet enough on a weekday afternoon to record an audio-interview, Mario was keen to photograph the site anyway, and we could all get something to eat. But the site became an important protagonist. Items on sale acted as a prompt for some of Val’s memories and anecdotes and most interestingly for me, the black-and-white canvas prints on the walls became grounded in a very personal story with Val’s comment, ‘what you don’t realise is that that man in the white coat at the front is my grandad!’.



Val outside Terroni, photographed by Mario Badagliacca.

As discussed earlier, the current vogue for vintage-style homeware means that presentation of Terroni is not immediately distinguishable from of any of the new

establishments that seek to emulate a sense of ‘authentic’ Italy; I had paid little attention to these enlarged photos, as similar scenes of ‘Italian life’ can be found reproduced on the walls of chains like Caffè Nero and Costa. But Val’s identification of her grandfather in these images encouraged haptic recollections of Val’s childhood observation of his role in the shop:

Val: He was just an assistant. He used to serve in the shop. But I can remember coming down here with my father, and there’d be all big bins and tubs around here, the olive oil, you’d decant it into a bottle, and your pasta would be loose, rice, so it would all be, you know, laid out on big platters, the aromas, and all your sausages – I mean the smell when you walked in, some of the cheeses could knock your socks off!

[*Val and Georgia laugh*]

Val: Every year my grandad, if he went (..) well he used to go to Atrani and stay for about three months and he’d come home and he’d always bring us presents of cheese and salami and they were the cheeses that were in the nets [*Val looks around*] they haven’t got them now, you used to hang it up in your larder, it would to make everything else smell of that particular cheese. It stunk. It never went green, it used to last for months.

Mario: Yeah!

Val: It was the most amazing cheese, God knows what it was made of but it was, you know, he’d always bring these cheeses home. Like a little dolly and you’d hang it up in the net –

Mario: Yes I think it’s *provola*.

Val: Is it *provola*? I love *provola*.

Throughout Val’s interview, sensory childhood memories are prominent – she remembers helping her mother and grandmother ‘making pizzas for All Saint’s Day, which is when you make the pizzas’, and watching her grandmother making home-

made pasta. This affirms Duruz's identification that the 'vantage of the observing/helping child' is dominant in nostalgic narratives of homely kitchens; as Duruz puts it:

This is a gaze that effects a return to the world of childhood and to the pleasures of exploring its minute textures – to its tasting, touching, smelling, hearing. However, it is also a return to the primary position of the one who eats, who is nurtured, who is fed.²⁵²

In Val's narrative there was a very natural amalgamation of these types of memories with anecdotes from more recent trips to Italy which prompted me to ask her if she felt her relationship with 'Italy' or 'being Italian' had changed in anyway. She replied:

Val: Yes, yeah. I have (2.0) as I've grown older, I've felt far more Italian, than ever before. It's strange because I think you value things like that more as you get older, whereas when you're young you've got far too much on your mind to do and get done (..) live your life, go to the discos and, do your work, get stuff done and go on holiday and (..) but as you get older, your values change and I always regret not having um kept up more contact with relatives in Italy. Or, keeping up the language, which I started doing about five years ago [...]. I'm trying to redress what I should have done when I was in my twenties and maybe thirties. And I didn't.

Georgia: But it sounds a positive experience, to trace (..)?

Val: Yeah. It is lovely to (.) but then I suppose I had a young family to bring up, you've got other um things on your mind., and because those members of your family are in another country and you think (.) well, there's a language barrier straight away (.) it tends to put that brick wall up straight away. But now I think to myself, I could probably go over there and make myself reasonably understood, and I can understand what they're trying to tell me as long as they speak slowly (.) and I'm quite happy to do that.

²⁵² Duruz, p. 26.

Val's comments point to the significance of nostalgic reconstructions in creating meaning within an individual life course. Investigating her links with Italy, as she explains, is something she enjoys doing at a point in her life in which she finds herself in quieter, more reflective stage. 'I think you *value* things like that more as you get older, whereas when you're young you've got far too much on your mind to *do*', she emphasized. For Val, re-visiting the memories of her childhood and actively engaging with Italy is a meaningful project; an expression and development of subjectivity through which she negotiates changes in the life course.

I would like to return to Duruz's question as to whose remembering is at stake when one mourns the woman at the wood stove by focusing on structure and narration of the memories Agnello Hornby presents in *Il pranzo di Mosè* in light of Val's comments. Mosè is introduced to the reader as it was introduced to five-year-old Simonetta:

'Simonetta, eccola, la guardiola di Mosè!' Ma io l'avevo già avvistata, e il cuore mi batteva forte. Sapevo che dietro la guardiola, il terreno si piegava in colline coperte di ulivi e più giù, e metà collina, nascosta agli occhi degli automobilisti, c'era la nostra casa. Non vedevo l'ora di raggiungerla. Quello era Mosè. Un posto 'nostro'.²⁵³

('Simonetta, there it is, Mosè's gatehouse!' But I'd already spotted it, and my heart was thumping. I knew that after the gatehouse, the land folded into hills covered in olive trees and further beyond, hidden from the eyes of passing motorists, was our house. I couldn't wait to reach it. That was Mosè. 'Our' place).

Simonetta is encouraged to find Mosè herself, to notice the yellow stones of the Greek ruins, to observe the elements comprising the Sicilian countryside she coasts through with 'Papà'. The image of a little girl looking up to her father and absorbing his every word; 'Papà ripeteva quelle parole ogni volta che passava da lì, le sapevo a memoria' ('Papà repeated the same words every time we drove past, I knew them by heart') accentuates the underlying framing of Mosè in terms of the childhood delights of discovery.

²⁵³ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p.17.

This interpretation of the sensory pleasures of infancy in the preparation and sharing of food runs across Agnello Hornby's texts. The ritual of *caffè d'u parrinu* once again provides a useful departure point. Consider the following passage from *Un filo d'olio*:

Ogni ninfa ha il suo rito, e quello di Rosalia era il caffè d'u parrinu, celebrato soltanto all'arrivo di mamma e a quello di zia Teresa. La cuccuma del 'caffè speciale' - come lo chiamava Giuliana - brontolava sul fornello, il coperchio ben chiuso, ma dal beccuccio sfuggiva un profumo speziato, anticipo del pieno aroma, e ci raggiungeva sottile sottile, penetrava nelle narici e poi invadeva la stanza: un misto di cacao, vaniglia, chiodi di garofano, caffè e cannella.²⁵⁴

(Each enchantress has her ritual, and Rosalia's was *caffè d'u parrinu*, which she offered only when Mamma and auntie Teresa arrived. The Neapolitan pot used for 'special coffee' – as Giuliana called it – grumbled away on the stove, its lid firmly sealed, but from the spout the a warmly spiced scent escaped, the hint of the aroma to come, and it crept towards us, sneaked into our nostrils and then flooded the room: a mix of cacao, vanilla, cloves, coffee and cinnamon).

Described with a pervasive sensuality, the recollection of this ritual, performed only for 'mamma' and 'auntie Teresa' is one which clearly positions the narrator as the watching child. Drawing on Duruz's observations, we might situate the potency of nostalgia in terms of a lost perspective, rather than a vanished time or place – though this perspective, as we see in Agnello Hornby's presentation of Mosè, is projected onto particular places in particular times. We can understand the central feature of Agnello Hornby's looking back to be its emphasis on the past as a *time of looking forward*. Mosè is in fact defined according to anticipation: 'non vedevo l'ora di raggiungerla. Quello era Mosè' ('I couldn't wait to reach it. That was Mosè').

²⁵⁴ *Un filo d'olio*, p. 30.

Again, Ahmed's critical assessment of the history of happiness is productive here for its emphasis of the etymology of the word 'happiness' and attention to the 'hap', or the 'chance' of happiness:

Happiness is offered here as a sense of possibility. To turn happiness into an expectation is to annul that sense of possibility. When happiness is not something we promise to another, is not something we imagine is due to us or which we have a duty toward, is not something that we anticipate will accumulate from the right points, then other things can happen.²⁵⁵

Ahmed's contextualization of this argument, with a quotation from the character Clarissa in *The Hours* (2002) as heiress to the sadness (and namesake) of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, is also telling:

I remember one morning. Getting up at dawn. There was such a sense of possibility. You know that feeling. So this is this the beginning of happiness. This is where it starts, and of course there will always be more. It never occurred to me that it wasn't the beginning. It was happiness.²⁵⁶

The shifting perspective of the narrator of *Il pranzo di Mosè*, becomes particularly expressive when considered in light of Ahmed's construal of happiness as possibility. The book, structured into four main sections, combines practical advice on contemporary cooking, hosting and wellbeing with Agnello Hornby's childhood memories of Mosè. The first section, in which the author presents Mosè, gives the greatest prominence to memory and storytelling. The author introduces her text as follows:

Ma il mio più bello ricordo di Mosè, non è a Mosè. È legato ai tempi in cui avevo non più di cinque anni e abitavamo ad Agrigento. Talvolta, nel primo pomeriggio, Papà apriva la porta della stanza dove io e mia sorella Chiara, piccina, trascorrevamo le giornate con Giuliana, la nostra bambinaia, e annunciava dalla soglia: 'Vado a Mosè. Mi porto Simonetta'.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Ahmed, p. 592.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 592.

²⁵⁷ *Il pranzo di Mosè*, p. 15.

(But my happiest memory of Mosè is not at Mosè. It is from a time when I was no more than five years old and we lived in Agrigento. Sometimes, in the early afternoon, Papa would open the door of the room where Chiara, my baby sister, and I spent our days with Giuliana, our nanny, and call from doorway, 'I'm going to Mosè. I'm taking Simonetta with me').

The echo of the possibility that Ahmed recognises as happiness in Clarissa's words here is no less clear for its coincidental nature; the allusion in both narratives is to the promise of the hours that stretch out ahead of each protagonist. It is important to note, however, that this sense of possibility is not confined to childhood in *Il pranzo di Mosè*. Whilst it is true that the reader is greeted by a Simonetta placed in a childhood of carefree comforts, the interweaving of past and present throughout ultimately positions her as the head of a matriarchal household, responsible for the feeding and nurturing of others. The fluid mobility of the protagonist between the position of nurtured child and nurturing mother/host, underlined by the progressive mingling of childhood memories with recent anecdotes (including the filming of the 'Il pranzo di Mosè' television series) and recipes becomes meaningful in that it suggests the continual re-construction of the perspective of possibility. Agnello Hornby's celebration of her Mosè childhood can thus be understood as a celebration of curiosity, discovery, and possibility embodied by a place, rather than the place itself.

In seeking to recreate the perspective of possibility rather than security, Agnello Hornby's texts can be seen to offer a form of 'constructive nostalgia', which privileges chance and exploration, or perhaps more accurately, posits the continued renewal of possibility, the willingness to be open to possibility, as the key to deriving meaning and a sense of place: happiness is literally possibility. As the author explains in *La Mia Londra*:

Osservare Londra e i suoi abitanti porta alla scoperta di piccole gemme segrete, che si offrono soltanto a chi sa cercarle e che mi hanno permesso

di godere al massimo della mia città di adozione e di aumentare il godimento della vita in generale.²⁵⁸

(Observing London and its inhabitants leads me to the discovery of tiny hidden gems, available only to those who know how to look for them, that enable me to fully appreciate my adopted city and increase my general pleasure in life.)

Rather than unequivocally celebrating an inaccessible past, Agnello Hornby's constructive nostalgia – her insistence on the possibility of continuity between past and present, and the recreation of possibility of past in the present – has the crucial effect of introducing doubt into established narratives of security and community. Later in *La Mia Londra*, describing how her curiosity as an immigrant led her to research the history of Southern Italian migration to London, Agnello Hornby provocatively associates the experience of Sicilians in London with the Chinese in present-day Italy:

Come i cinesi in Italia, i siciliani a Londra erano immigrati invisibili: lavoravano, stavano a casa, non si facevano vedere in giro [...]. Mantenevano le abitudini antiche: parlavano in dialetto e i figli non erano incoraggiati a fare amicizia con gli inglesi, né a proseguire gli studi dopo la scuola dell'obbligo; spesso si sposavano con compaesani [...]. Pochi si erano inseriti nella società britannica.²⁵⁹

(Like the Chinese in Italy, the Sicilians in London were invisible immigrants: they worked, they stayed at home, they did not venture out and about [...]. They kept up old habits: they spoke in their language and their children were not encouraged to develop friendships with English people, nor to continue their studies after they had completed the compulsory years of schooling; often they married partners from their hometowns [...]. Only few were integrated into British society).

²⁵⁸ *La mia Londra* (Florence and Milan: Giunti, 2014), p. 6.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

Re-framing the well-known and much-celebrated history of the quiet perseverance of Italian emigrants in terms of present-day migration from China to Italy can be interpreted as a subtle but persistent challenge to the prevalence of racist discourse circulating within contemporary Italy in relation to Chinese migrants. Here, continuity between past and present is used to disturb the familiar, to open up reflection on the possibility of similarity – ‘isn’t their story the same as ours?’ Rather than unquestioningly sustaining nostalgic visions of the past, Agnello Hornby invokes the myths established by collective memory to introduce doubt and to invite reflection upon the present. What the texts ultimately seem to reinforce is the possibility of *making* happiness through quotidian micro-practices and a self-reflexive awareness of one’s surroundings.

iv. Chapter Conclusions

To be sure, Terroni’s material recreation of the past, Agnello Hornby’s published memoirs, and Val’s private interview all represent very different modes of remembering. The contrast between the position of Agnello Hornby, writing for publication for a wide and relatively anonymous readership, and Val, in conversation with Mario and myself in a particular space, may have some impact on the perspectives they have adopted. Across these diverse invocations of Italian pasts, however; commercial and personal, material and textual, a consistent image of Italy emerges; that of a more ‘natural’, homely elsewhere.

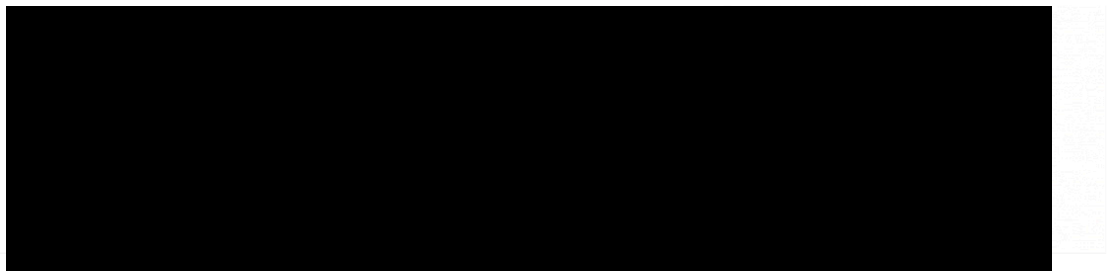
Blending a brisk practicality with evocative and sensory visions of the author’s childhood, the overall tone of *Il pranzo di Mosè* is an unashamedly happy one, and my analysis here has sought to locate the terms of this happiness via a critical reading of happiness as possibility. In setting my reading of Agnello Hornby’s use of personal memory against the material construction of the past effected by the space of Terroni, my aim has been to both signal a broader topography of nostalgia, and to start to query its attribution to a need for societal anchoring in the face of the technological and communication developments in modernity in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

By highlighting how her sense of Italian identity has changed with age, Val Di Benedetto’s oral testimony reminds us of the need to situate the desire to look back

reflectively on 'lost' homes within the individual life paths. And viewed through the lens of the life course, we might identify the prevailing trope of Agnello Hornby's text *Il pranzo di Mosè* as that of possibility. Though at first glance the author seems to be lamenting the loss of the traditions of Mosè on a wider level, the book actually reinforces the possibility of recreating the values and investment in kin work that Mosè represents by recounting how Agnello Hornby enacts this process of recreation, and implicitly inviting her readers to do so too, with the inclusion of recipes. Mosè, the author's childhood summer home, is first and foremost a symbol of possibility. Ultimately, Agnello Hornby's works are presented as an example of how it might prove more productive to conceive of nostalgia as the loss not of a specific time or place, but as more closely related to the *possibility* that a specific time or place represents. In privileging the interlocking of the perspectives of a child filled with wonder at the sensory world unfolding before her, and a responsible matriarch upholding the rituals of kinship work, the texts offer an example of the use-value of nostalgia as a constructive project within an individual life course. This in turn offers creative possibilities for new feminist readings of female labour, the recognition of kinship work and the possibility of gratification it promises, as well as, crucially, the possibility of insecurity, with Agnello Hornby's texts manipulating the 'comfortable' nostalgia of collective narratives to critique the security of the present.

Using Ahmed's recognition of the coercive power of happiness, I have indicated the unhappy stories and personal sacrifice that are obscured and buried by sentimental readings of homely pasts. Interestingly, this is something that Fortier tracks in the present-day celebration of the annual procession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel that animates Terroni and the surrounding area in July, suggesting that 'the Hill is remembered in a way that draws essentialist and exclusionist boundaries – indeed it obliterates the presence of Irish and other residents that lived in this area at the time, while it traces generational bloodlines of belonging and continuity'.²⁶⁰ I want to now focus more closely on the dynamics of this process; on how subjective investment in a personal past is played out in concrete terms and sentimentalized in collective memory, and how we might most productively conceptualize invocations of the familial past as a resource. In the next chapter I will develop this inquiry into the past, selfhood, and value by scrutinizing the concept of heritage.

²⁶⁰ Fortier, p. 142.



Objects Val brought to interview; the family photograph album, Olive Besagni's book, A Better Life, and a bracelet bought on holiday on the Amalfi coast with the traditional Neapolitan curniciello charm.
Photographed by Mario Badagliacca.

III. Heritage: the gifting of the past

<i>I watch</i>	<i>Would transport me to</i>
<i>This patch</i>	<i>For the few lines</i>
<i>With bated breath</i>	<i>I've so far heard</i>
<i>Wondering to what length</i>	<i>Are heading me back</i>
<i>Or breadth</i>	<i>In the path</i>
<i>Their queer,</i>	<i>Of a much-cherished past</i>
<i>Yet familiar stories</i>	<i>To relieve memories</i>
<i>Told in exotic tones</i>	<i>Of a never-to-be forgotten heritage.</i>

'Femi Abidogun, *Familiar Strangers*.

The Carluccio family now numbered seven, living in the stationmaster's house in this beautiful seaside town. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and with good reason.'

Antonio Carluccio, *A Recipe for Life*.²⁶¹

As we shall note that this morality and organization still function in our own societies, in unchanging fashion and, so to speak, hidden, below the surface, and as we believe that in this we have found one of the human foundations on which our societies are built, we shall be able to deduce a few moral conclusions.

Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies* (1925).²⁶²

This chapter reflects upon the contradictions of the idea of heritage. It focuses on how we can most accurately describe and examine the dynamics of the relationship between the past, collective identity, and a sense of self, with a specific interest in

²⁶¹ Antonio Carluccio, *A Recipe for Life* (London: Hardie Grant, 2012), p. 9.

²⁶² Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. by. Jane I. Guyer (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, *L'Année Sociologique*, 1925; London: Routledge, 1990), p. 5.

invocations of migrant working-class heritage. It develops the inquiry of the previous chapter into the nostalgic visions of Italy-as-elsewhere, by looking at *how* the processes implicated in these resourceful readings of the past are related to subjecthood in the present. We touched upon this issue by considering the constructive nostalgia of Agnello Hornby's texts in light of Val's increased interest in her Italian past during later stages of the life course, and we will return to Val's interview here from a more theoretically-oriented perspective. I compare her unprompted use of the term 'heritage' to that of Silvestro, the founder and managing director of Sud Italia, a mobile pizza van stationed at London's Old Spitalfields Market, whose interest in heritage was related to the United Nations' Education Scientific and Cultural Organization ('UNESCO')'s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. I offer a close reading of these apparently very diverse assertions of heritage using the trope of the gift, suggesting that the meaning of heritage is most productively understood in terms of performative gift exchange: through the elaboration and transmission of elements of the past, these individuals negotiate a sense of self. But the past doesn't just have a use-value, I argue; Val's and Silvestro's respective accounts reveal how both legislative evaluations of the past and personal heritage assertions are predicated upon the desire to assert subjecthood, and they indicate that elements of working-class and migrant heritage – in this case, working-class Southern Italian heritage – also have exchange-value, as we will examine.

Though the arguments extended in this chapter are based on Italian examples, they have been very much influenced by the discussions of the notion of heritage arising in the 'Writing Across Languages and Borders' creative writing workshops that form part of the TML project.²⁶³ Femi Abigodun's poem, 'Familiar Strangers', was a contribution to one of these sessions. His portrayal of the past as 'much-cherished', of heritage as 'never-to-be forgotten', and of stories 'queer/Yet familiar' captures evocatively the issues of affect, obligation, distance, and familiarity considered below. This encourages me to think that the interpretation of heritage as a performative gift exchange advanced may be usefully extended to recognise and

²⁶³ 'Writing Across Languages and Cultures', organized by Naomi Wells and Jennifer Burns with Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, Sandwell Arts Café, West Bromwich, 12th-20th May 2015, and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 3rd February-22nd June 2016 <<https://writingacrossblog.wordpress.com>> [accessed 21 June 2017].

analyse the identification processes and conflicts associated with a variety of global, local, and personal heritage claims. For this reason, I dedicate the first section of this chapter to providing an overview of the most relevant current interest in the concept of heritage. Drawing on ethnographic theorists of gift exchange, I offer a critical reading of the language of the UNESCO heritage charter, establishing the theoretical underpinning of my arguments by drawing on the synchronies between the principle of the gift from an anthropological perspective and issues related to global heritage discourse. In the second section, I use this framework to consider the presentation of heritage in the narratives of Val and Silvestro, concentrating on the way both participants articulate their *reception* of different Italian identities and how they interpret their Italian and Neapolitan heritage to create meaning in the present. Finally, I focus on the portrayal of grandparents in these personal heritage narratives; here I draw on the perspective offered by another participant, Nadia, to highlight the types of identities invoked. I indicate how personal affect and a sense of distance co-exist in the working-class and migrant heritage celebrated in these accounts, in such a way as to legitimize the position of the narrator. Ultimately, the aim of the chapter is not to define heritage, but to propose a tentative analytical framework from which the processes it engenders can be contemplated.

i. Heritage and property: parallels between the principle of the gift and the UNESCO ICH

In the previous chapter, I queried how far it is productive to exclusively attribute collective valorisation of the past as a site of stability to a disconcerting rate of contemporary technological progression, but I would not deny that the processes of globalisation, the development of travel and communication technologies, and today's media connectivity have impacted upon our ability to access it, to recreate, share and store images of the past. The technological developments and increased facility of long-haul movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have raised specific questions and problems regarding the conservation and interpretation of the past. One of the most quantifiable effects of these new technologies is an exponential development of the heritage trade.²⁶⁴ Accordingly,

²⁶⁴ See Rodney Harrison, 'The Politics of Heritage', in *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*, edited by Rodney Harrison (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 154-196 (p. 154), and

evaluations of heritage from a variety of disciplinary perspectives - archaeology, anthropology, history, sociology - have depicted heritage as a mediator, arbitrating between an unsatisfactory present and an unclear future. 'Heritage is not an inquiry into the past but a celebration of it,' David Lowenthal summarizes, explicitly differentiating the objectives of heritage from those of history; it is 'not an effort to know what actually happened but a profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes'.²⁶⁵ Echoing Lowenthal's reading, Rodney Harrison et al. point more constructively to the role of heritage in providing a sense of cohesion for groups in contemporary society:

An attachment to the past encourages people to keep mementos, and can begin to create resistance to change at a larger scale, as well as fostering the notion of heritage as a shared and collective thing that binds society (or perhaps more accurately, parts of a society) together.²⁶⁶

Correspondingly, Graeme Davison proposes that the increased value of heritage discourse in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is most likely related to its analytical vagueness, stressing how the 'sense of obligation' towards the past that heritage creates is in fact future-orientated:

[The word heritage] hinted at a treasury of deep-buried, but indefinite, values. It invoked a lofty sense of obligation to one's ancestors and descendants. And it secured the high ground of principle for the conservationists in their perennial battle against the improvers, developers and demolishers. Heritage – what we value in the past – is defined largely in terms of what we value or repudiate in the present or fear in the future.²⁶⁷

David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 12.

²⁶⁵ Lowenthal, p. xi.

²⁶⁶ Rodney Harrison et al., 'Introduction: Heritage, Memory and Modernity', *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough et al. (Oxford: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1-12 (p. 2).

²⁶⁷ Graeme Davidson, 'Heritage: From Patrimony to Pastiche', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Fairclough et al. (Oxford: Routledge, 2008, pp. 31-40), p. 33.

Davison's interpretation of the currency of heritage is therefore very congruent with Huyssen's and Massey's reading of the 'nostalgia boom' that we examined in the previous chapter: sentimental images of the past can be understood as a response to contemporary social trauma (that is, rapid technological development and the sense of insecurity this promotes). What is also evidenced in both Davison's and Harrison's respective analyses, however, is the very concrete way in which heritage claims serve to unite parts of society – here, conservationists and Indigenous Australians – via a shared investment in the material residues of the past. The abstract ideal of heritage thus seems to be intrinsically and quite practically linked with the notion of community.

In this sense, there are clear equivalences with the principle of gift-giving as viewed from an anthropological perspective. After all, ethnographic approaches have long observed and debated the significance of gift-exchange in terms of 'community', 'attachment', and 'obligation'. Pioneering ethnographer, anthropologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss's seminal essay collection *The Gift* paved the way for critical observation of the giving and exchanging of materials and services in 'archaic' societies (Mauss's terminology) as a practice which is 'apparently free and disinterested but nevertheless constrained and self-interested'.²⁶⁸ And Mauss's insistence that his study of gift exchange in the clan-based societies of Polynesia, Melanesia, and the American Northwest implicates systems that 'still function in our own societies' has been defended by a number of scholarly meditations on micro-practice in the industrial and post-industrial West, not least the kinship work discussed in the previous chapter.²⁶⁹ In his comprehensive anthropological overview of the topic, John F. Sherry explains that in and across different cultures and time periods, 'inferentially or implicitly attached strings are a connotative aspect of the gift, social bonds being thereby forged and reciprocation encouraged.'²⁷⁰ Building on the traditional tribal distinction between gifts and capital, Lewis Hyde presents the gift as a *social* fact, whereby 'a circulation of gifts creates community out of individual expressions of goodwill'.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Mauss, p. 4.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁷⁰ John F. Sherry, 'Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10.2 (1983), 157-68 (p. 158).

²⁷¹ Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World* (London and Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2012), p. 38.

In light of this parallel emphasis on community and affect, it seems both helpful and appropriate to use the principle of the gift – traditionally subject of much anthropological study in small-scale, pre-industrial societies – to shed light on the concept of heritage today. This is also a way of calling into question the distinction between ‘industrial’ and ‘pre-industrial’ when it comes to what Miller calls ‘our fundamental materiality’, or how, in consumer and non-industrial societies alike, our sense of self is inextricable from complex relationships with the things that we produce, and that produce us.²⁷² In the narratives I consider we will note how things – pizza dough, and a photograph album – are crucial in the elaboration of a sense of collective and individual identity.

Let’s consider a practical example. Silvestro’s discussion of the most recent petition for Intangible Cultural Heritage status for Neapolitan pizza and the (misreported) UNESCO recognition of Napoletano as a language illustrates well why it might be constructive to construe heritage as ‘the gifting of the past’. During interview, perhaps due to the different vernacular employment of ‘heritage’ in English compared to ‘patrimonio’ in Italian, Silvestro interwove an emotive identification of personal heritage with institutional definitions of global heritage in a way which reinforced a sense of Neapolitan collective identity, suggesting that Neapolitan pizza should be ‘given’ to UNESCO:

Io credo che sia una cosa giusta, farla (pizza) diventare:: proprietà UNESCO perché comunque tu vai a:: a proteggere quel prodotto e farlo - e renderlo, diciamo, unico, e:: a far capire a tutti le persone che Napoli è buona anche perché - sai adesso la lingua napoletana è una lingua riconosciuta anche dell’UNESCO [...]. Quindi se lo diventa anche la pizza io sono contentissimo. Sì perché comunque tu se ci pensi (.) in tutta l’Italia, se uno deve dire qualcosa di male dice e:: dove sta la mafia? dove sta la camorra? Napoli. Dove c’è la spazzatura? Napoli. Cioè (.) tutte le cose cattive le associano là. Invece se io devo consigliare a un inglese, quando viene qua a prendere un po’ di pizza, dove deve andare in Italia, io ti consiglio la Sicilia, ti consiglio la Puglia, ti consiglio la Calabria, ti consiglio Napoli perché è bellissima.

²⁷² Miller, p. 4.

(I think it's the right thing to do, make (pizza) UNESCO property because then you're protecting that product and (.) and making it, and rendering it, you know, unique and you get everyone to realise that Naples is good, also because - do you know that now Neapolitan is recognized as a language, even by UNESCO [...]. So if pizza becomes UNESCO too I'll be really happy. Yeah because if you think about it (.) in all of Italy, if someone's got to say something bad it's, where's the mafia? Where's the *camorra*? Naples. Where's the rubbish? Naples. Anything bad is associated with the city. But if I have to suggest where to go in Italy, to English people when they come here to get a bit of pizza, I say to you go to Sicily, I say Puglia, I say Calabria, I say Naples, because it's beautiful).

Silvestro's discourse exemplifies how the valorisation of cultural product or practice enacted by institutional heritage recognition works to create a strong sense of community – and, as we shall concentrate on presently, of self. Before moving to examine Silvestro's relationship with his Neapolitan heritage, I want to probe further into the relationship between community, self, property, and value as it is presented in legislative terms, which I think can offer key insights into how heritage functions on a personal and social level.

To begin with, it is worth pointing out that The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity ('ICH List') which Silvestro refers to was born out of criticism of the bias identified in the original 1972 World Heritage Convention. Ratified in 2003, the focus of this separate initiative on people, knowledge and skills, rather than objects and monuments, was elaborated in direct response to the disproportionate representation of Western countries.²⁷³ And implicit in the Convention of the ICH is the *gifting* of cultural products and practices. As Article 1 of the Convention states:

The purposes of this Convention are:

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities,

²⁷³ Michael A. Di Giovine and Ronda L. Brulotte, 'Introduction: Food and Foodways as Cultural Heritage', in *Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Ronda L. Brulotte and Michael A. Di Giovine (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 1-28 (p. 12).

groups and individuals concerned;

(c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;

(d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.²⁷⁴

Notice how a community is charged with the responsibility of protecting and transmitting the value of its cultural heritage within a wider collective ('ensuring mutual appreciation'; 'international cooperation and assistance'), rather than being granted property rights.²⁷⁵ The emphasis of the ICH is on the contribution of valued cultural practices to a global community, rather than property claims of cultural insiders. Again, this seems to be an echo of Hyde's argument that the most accurate understanding of a gift is as a form of property that perishes for the giver; 'in gift exchange the transaction itself consumes the object', Hyde explains, 'the mere passage of the gift, the act of the donation, contains the feeling, and therefore the passage alone is the investment'.²⁷⁶

And yet, as we see in Silvestro's comments (and the citation from restaurateur and chef Antonio Carluccio I have included at the start of the chapter), the valorisation of a particular social group or site is perceived as one of the most important consequences of ICH inscription; though 'a country technically offers up (UNESCO 2008: 5) its heritage property to the international community', Michael A. Di Giovine and Ronda L. Brulotte point out, the prestige of being included on the list anticipates remuneration in the form of donations from conservation groups and through the stimulus of economic growth via tourism.²⁷⁷ Fitting, here, given that our object of study is the past, is Pierre Bourdieu's attention to time. For the French sociologist, it was *time* that distinguishes gift from economic exchange, as the passing of time crafts the social illusion that the gift is 'an event in itself, unrequited, generous, delightful, rather than a snapshot of an exchange that will unfold full circle with future

²⁷⁴ 'Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage', UNESCO ICH website, online: <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>> [accessed 16 September 2016].

²⁷⁵ Di Giovine and Brulotte, pp. 11-12.

²⁷⁶ Hyde, pp. 8-9, and p. 35.

²⁷⁷ Di Giovine and Brulotte, pp. 11-12.

return'.²⁷⁸ So while Hyde suggests that the momentum of gifts is distinct from capital,²⁷⁹ we need to be alert to the ways in which gift of heritage entangles personal meaning with the past as resource that is recognised as valuable and *can be capitalized upon*. This is where Beverley Skeggs' identification of use-value and exchange-value is helpful. In the following sections, we will concentrate on how these heritage claims intertwine use-value, in the form of personal meaning-making processes, with exchange-value, because the 'authenticity' of certain pasts can be converted into a prestige, honour, or status, via what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital (I am not interested here in economic capital, though to be sure the business of global heritage is one of lucrative profit).

Before we look at how the use- and exchange-value of the past plays out in practical terms, let us return briefly to the observation of the introductory chapter that the dominant understanding of subjecthood in the industrialized world has been historically constructed in opposition to a 'primitive' materiality. It is important to remember that the European, colonialist model of subjecthood established from the sixteenth century was predicated on the capacity to own and exchange property in one's person, to recognise the value of things in exchange – a construct that was set in contrast to the attachment of West Africans to material objects.²⁸⁰ The distinction between 'civilized' and 'savage' in this manner wrought, Stallybrass explains:

A new definition of what it was to be European; that is, a subject unhampered by fixation upon objects, a subject who, having recognized the true (i.e. market) value of the object-as-commodity, fixated instead upon transcendental values that transformed gold into ships, ships into guns, guns into tobacco, tobacco into sugar, sugar into gold, and all into an accountable profit.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Larisa Jašarević, *Health and Wealth on the Bosnian Market: Intimate Debt* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), p. 102, cf. Pierre Bourdieu, 'Marginalia – Some Additional Notes on the Gift', trans. by R. Nice, in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. by Alan Schrift (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 231-41 (p. 237).

²⁷⁹ Hyde, pp. 8-9, and p. 35.

²⁸⁰ Skeggs, pp. 8-9.

²⁸¹ Peter Stallybrass, 'Marx's Coat', in *Border Fetishism: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*, ed. by Patricia Spyer (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 183-207 (p. 186), cited in Skeggs, p. 8.

I am stressing this point here because the ‘developed, European’ association of property, value, and selfhood permeates the language of UNESCO’s original World Heritage Convention, which has accordingly been criticized for its assumption of Western capitalist values.²⁸² The colonialist distinction between ‘civilized’ and ‘primitive’ also contrives to imbue the latter with a particular appeal for its associations with ‘the authentic’ - more on this presently. Of the UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention, Lynn Meskell writes:

Its discursive formulation has assumed an overwhelmingly positive mantle in recent decades. However, global world heritage could be perceived by some as an extension of the colonial project, traveling to, knowing and mapping territories outside one’s own national boundaries. The language of UNESCO conventions reinforces Western notions of *value* and *rights*, while the *ownership* and *maintenance* of the past is suffused with the concepts surrounding *property*.²⁸³

On the one hand, precisely as Meskell indicates, this terminology; ‘value’, ‘ownership’, ‘property’, relates to a particular Western model of the past as a teleological resource, which is in conflict with the view that many indigenous people hold that “‘the past’ is not to be bought or sold, studied or scientifically tested, displayed or objectified”, and that to essentialize certain sites or objects in this way removes them from the communities they invigorate (Meskell uses the example of the contemporary repainting of Aboriginal rock sites as a case in point – vandalism, or an interactive engagement with traditional life-ways depending on your viewpoint).²⁸⁴ But I also think we can track an ironic reversal of the distinction that sets a ‘primitive’ attachment to material objects against a ‘civilized’ relationship based on the value of exchange in UNESCO’s ideal that some objects and sites should be venerated by all humanity. To me, this in many respects mirrors the same ‘arbitrary’ attachment to objects and sites for which colonialists demonized Africans.²⁸⁵ What I would like to do is extend Meskell’s identification that UNESCO’s classification of historical objects and sites favours a reading of the past-as-property

²⁸² Harrison 2010, p. 165.

²⁸³ Meskell, p. 568.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 567.

²⁸⁵ Skeggs, p. 8.

to include intangible pasts, to embodied gestures and memories, to the concept of heritage itself. Fundamentally what I am asking is: if the past is property, what does it mean to 'receive' it? Why is it desirable, and when might it become a burden? Who benefits from this gift – and who stands to lose? We will now address these questions by examining heritage claims in personal narratives.

ii. Use-value and the gift of heritage in personal life narratives: Val and Silvestro

In the previous chapter I focused on the sensory nature of Val's childhood memories and how her identification with Italy has strengthened with age. If we revisit her narrative from a gifting perspective, the articulation of heritage as a gift emerges very clearly. Val, whose grandparents migrated from Atrani and Ravello (Campania) to London, reiterates that she feels 'lucky' to have her Italian heritage. It is expressed unambiguously as something she has received; 'what I look back on and think to myself, do you know what, that is something I've got to really embrace'. At the start of the interview when we introduced ourselves, Val explained to Mario and myself how her friendship with my mother had developed with, I think, a telling pause: 'when we met at the um college, our love for Italian I think drew us together. Me with my (..) heritage'.

It is worth noting that the Italian legal system currently (controversially) privileges the principle of *jus sanguinis*, granting citizenship rights to those born to an Italian parent regardless of country of birth, so Val would be able to claim Italian nationality. During the course of research, many people I met like Val identified as Italian, whereas interestingly Val was hesitant to position herself as Italian, except when remembering her school days. This hesitation may have been linked to a lack of linguistic confidence, particularly in the presence of Mario. She spoke instead of her 'Italian background', 'Italian origins' and her 'heritage', and this latter term seemed to enable her to articulate belonging whilst acknowledging the difference – and distance – between her experience of Italy and that of her grandparents. Because of this hesitance, and apparently meditative choice of the term 'heritage', I asked Val to explain what she meant by it.

If I explained my Italian heritage (..) it's umm, knowing that, when I was growing up as a young girl, it wasn't all meat pie and mash potatoes [laughs]. I know that puts heritage into a bit of a strange box, but that's how I think I understand it. You know, I was - my mum was making pizzas, for All Saint's Day, which is when you make the pizzas, and they weren't just bought out of the shop, she got the dough and made them, and we put all the pizzas together. [...]. I think that sort of puts my Italian heritage in a nutshell really. You know it wasn't just meat pie and chips. And it wasn't going to - you know when I'd go back to school in September, and they'd say oh where have you been on holiday Valerie, and I'd say 'Italy': what? You know, to me it was a natural thing, but to most kids, they'd go to, I don't know, Clacton? Holiday camps?

Her response demonstrates well how heritage works in quotidian realities to distinguish community belonging. Churchgoing and preparation for the Catholic rite of Holy Communion as a child, and practical family acts such as food preparation and consumption, seem to symbolise Italian belonging for Val. It is also through this everyday unremarkable behaviour (unremarkable for Val, that is) that she was recognised as Italian:

It was a funny story, when I first met Dave, my husband, I said to him oh you know, come home for dinner (..) I was still living with my parents at the time (..) and I said oh we're going to do (..) 'cause he knew I'd got some Italian background (..) and he said what are we going to have for dinner, something Italian? And I said we can do if you want - I said we'll have spaghetti bolognese. Well he sort of thought oh that'll be alright, I can manage that one. 'Course he thought spaghetti came out of a tin. And when he saw it, and when he saw the gusto with which my dad ate his spaghetti - any Italian knows how, you know you can eat your [gestures to indicate] - that was a complete learning curve.

We can see how there is an underlying emphasis on the process of transmission in Val's narrative. Embodied knowledge as mundane as a flourished twisting of spaghetti is interpreted as a gift capable of communicating a sense of continuity with

the past, and thus a sense of self. Later in the interview her grandparents' villages were also cited as sites triggering strong emotive identification:

It's just special. Yeah. It's just special. There's always that (.) they'll be hairs on the back of your neck when you walk in to Atrani. 'Cause there's nothing there, but it's just, you know it's where your family come from.

In this respect, there are marked similarities between Val's relationship with Italy and Silvestro's conceptualization of an 'inherited' Neapolitan identity. Silvestro is the founder and manager of Sud Italia. I contacted Silvestro after friends aware of my research interests suggested Sud Italia was an example of an 'authentic' Italian 'space' in London - the van has been the object of much media attention, particularly from the online Italian community, 'Italian Kingdom'. Its Italian name, Sud Italia-Pizza Napoletana, the use of the emblem of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies in its logo, and the sky-blue finish in homage to the football strip of Naples all stand out as an explicit celebration of an Italian, and specifically Neapolitan, identity. But Silvestro was born in Pescara, Abruzzo, and before moving to London four years ago (as he explains, 'per fare una nuova esperienza'; 'for a new experience'), he had spent his life some 250km from Naples, which is located on the opposite coast and separated from Abruzzo by the highest peaks of the Apennine mountain range that run down the spine of Italy. Though Pescara is often considered to be 'Southern', with all the connotations this brings in Italy, it is worth highlighting to the reader unfamiliar with these cities that the relatively anonymous, conservative Adriatic seaside town is culturally and geographically very distinct from Naples. Naples has an almost mythical status in Italian culture which is perpetuated in the celebration/deriding of a unique Neapolitan sense of humour, geographical situation, history, criminality, etc.; a dynamic which has been regularly played out in the aggressive, albeit inventive, confrontations of the long-standing rivalry between the two football teams (in England you might say it's a bit like someone from Bridlington describing themselves as Scouse).

When he was interviewed in Old Spitalfields in January 2016, Silvestro expressed an affective attachment to his grandparents' home in terms that echo Val's description of how Atrani raises 'hairs on the back of your neck', commenting 'quando vado a Napoli mi vengono i brividi e mi viene da piangere. È bellissima la sensazione che mi

da' ('when I go to Naples I shiver with emotion and I want to cry. It's such a beautiful sensation'). And like Val, he articulates heritage as an embodied gift, by attributing his aptitude as a pizzaiolo to being of Neapolitan descent, suggesting that making pizza was 'in his blood':

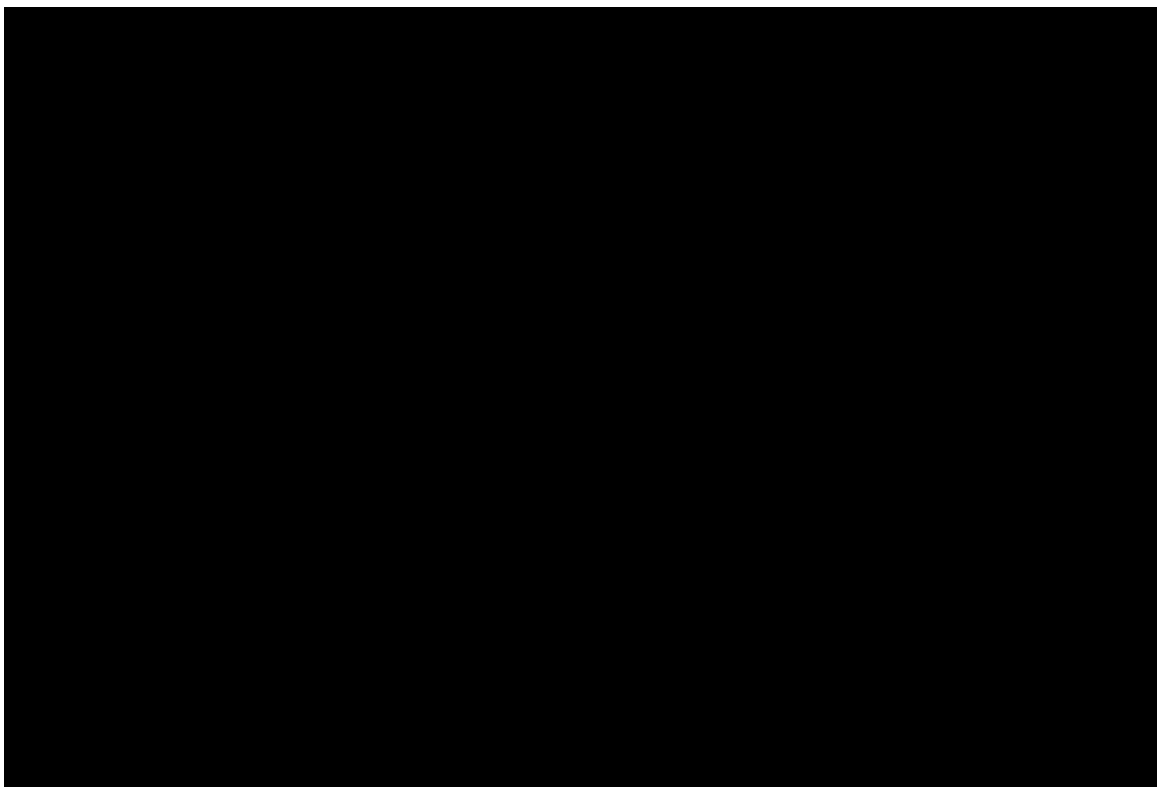
Ho imparato a fare la pizza qui a Londra, devo essere sincero. Ma tutta la famiglia del mio nonno e tutti i parenti sono ancora lì a Sant'Antimo, fanno il pane sotto i garage, quindi ce l'ho un po' nel sangue. Ci ho messo pochissimo, ad imparare a fare la pizza! Due mesi e ho imparato a fare la pizza!

(I learnt to make pizza here in London, I've got to be honest with you. But all my grandfather's family and all the relatives are still there in Sant'Antimo, making bread outside the garage, so it's in my blood. It took me no time at all to learn how to make pizza! Two months and I'd learnt how to make pizza!)

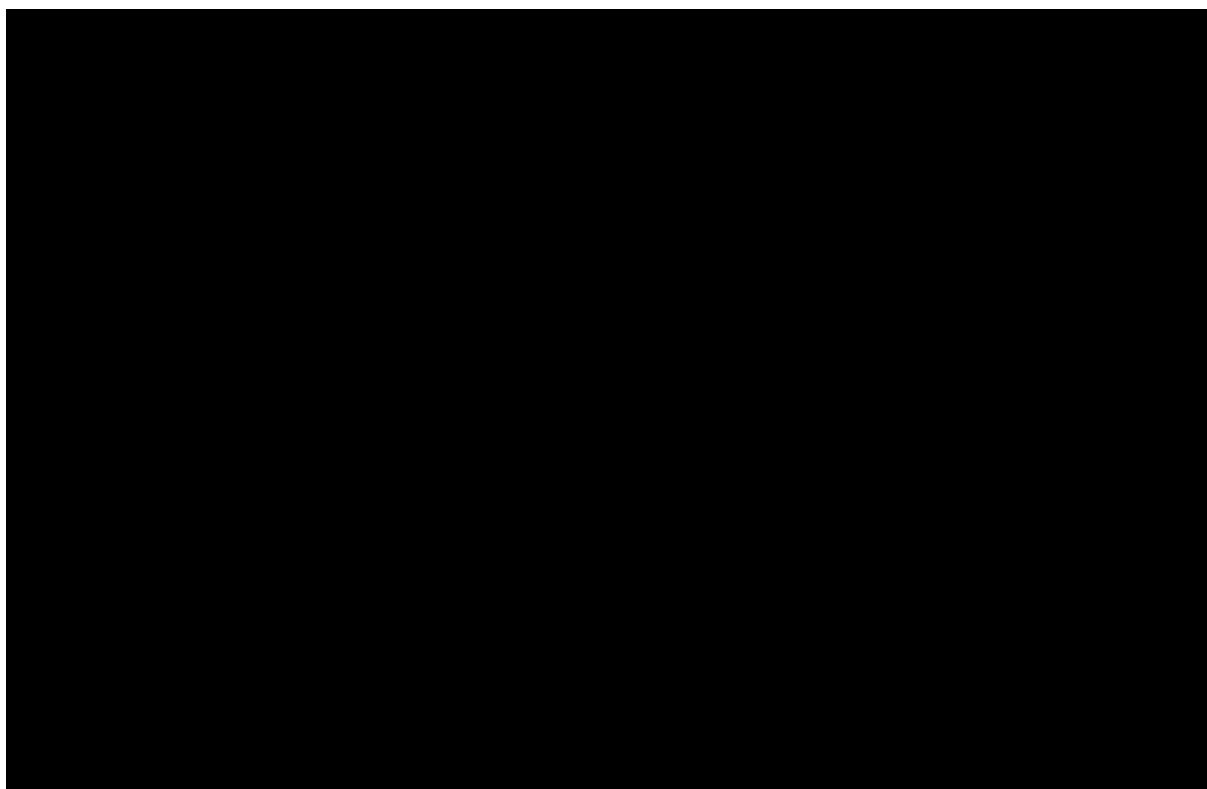
What we can observe in both Val's and Silvestro's respective interviews is that Italian-ness and Neapolitan-ness are expressed as something they have received. Through the sentiments of fortune and gratitude that they express in 'receiving' their respective Neapolitan and Italian identities, Silvestro and Val are tacitly positioned as heirs to forms of Italian culture. But what does this mean in everyday life – what are the attachments and obligations associated with this gift?

Silvestro's enthusiastic discussion of his elaboration of the traditional Neapolitan recipe, together with his presentation of his path to becoming a pizzaiolo, emphasise the interpretation of heritage as a creative task; specific elements of his familial past are selected and reworked according to his sense of self, simultaneously generating a sense of generational continuity and enabling inventive re-elaborations.

Non è che sono nato pizzaiolo - solo perché mio nonno e i miei cugini erano panettieri, so fare la pizza, no, l'ho studiato un pochino [...]. L'unico problema, della pizza napoletana, è che a volte rimane un po' sullo stomaco. Questa cosa qui dipende dal tempo di maturazione che lo fanno fare (.) la maturazione è (.). Fai finta che l'impasto, quando fai l'impasto



Sud Italia in Old Spitalfields Market.
Images courtesy of: @sud_italia <https://twitter.com/sud_italia?lang=en>.



della pizza, è come se fosse un bambino. Il bambino deve crescere, quindi se tu (.) più lo fai crescere, più il bambino c'ha la testa dritta e:: va bene.

(It's not that I was born a pizzaiolo - just because my grandfather and my cousins were breadmakers, I know how to make pizza, no, I've studied it a bit [...]. The only problem, with Neapolitan pizza, is that sometimes it'll sit on your stomach a bit. That's because of how long they let the dough rise. You have to think that this dough's like a baby. He needs time to grow properly, so if you (.) the more time he's got to grow, the more he'll mature, a::nd he's a good person to work with!)

This complex nexus of familial and personal identifications that Silvestro interprets in pizza dough and Val's anecdote on the 'right' way to eat spaghetti correspond with Adrian Blackledge, Angela Creese, and Rachel Hu's findings in a recent ethnographic study of Chinese heritage in Birmingham:

The inheritance of the past was a resource from which to choose some features of heritage for the present and future, while leaving others in the past. Certain artefacts were imbued with a sense of history, identity and continuity. These artefacts represented values and meanings beyond themselves: they asserted and expressed identity and social and cultural values and meanings [...]. Heritage was *embodied*, and included gestures, bearing, and physical interaction.²⁸⁶

Like Silvestro, Val makes a practical investment in the interpretation, maintenance, and bequest of her Italian heritage. The fact that the photo album she brought to our interview was in itself a gift is suggestive: put together as a present for Val by her elder sister, Irene, the well-worn collection of non-chronological black-and-white images and first communion tokens offers a tangible symbol of the ways in which the gift of heritage is personally and socially *constructed* and *constructive*. Prompted by the album to recount her childhood journeys to Italy, Val moves from her own memories of Ravello in the 1950s to those of her grandparents:

²⁸⁶ Adrian Blackledge, Angela Creese, and Rachel Hu, 'Protean Heritage, Everyday Superdiversity', *Working Papers in Translanguaging and Translation* (W.P. 13), online: <<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx>> [accessed 16 September 2015], p. 2.

Now, in the fifties, to get to Ravello, from Amalfi or Atrani, you'd have to walk. There was about fifteen hundred steps. There's a road now, with buses. But there was no roads in those days, and you've got to remember that my grandmother lived in Ravello, my grandad lived in Atrani, so to woo her when he was courting her, he had to walk up the steps (...) twice, there and back, just to see her.

The narrative quality of this extract; the rhythm of Val's pauses and words ('twice, there and back, just to see her') and the seamless interchange between her own past and memories related to her correspond to Hills de Zárte's conclusions that, in mediating trans-generational migration, 'making links between object, image and developing accompanying reflective narratives is not a rarefied pursuit but a very ordinary human phenomenon'.²⁸⁷ Val used the photographs throughout our interview not only to identify specific people, but, as in this extract, to conjure a general sense of a past-ness. The album is therefore as much an object as it is a collection of images, evoking for Val memories of her late sister as much as it does the people captured in the frames – some of whom she does not remember, or perhaps never knew; 'We're not sure who that's of, but that's obviously a school photo, and that will have been St. Peter's school in this area', she comments, 'and we think though that that's probably my dad's brother. Who was I think a couple of years older but we don't know who's in that unfortunately.'

Elizabeth Edwards and more recently, Annemarie Money, have shown that the relationship between giver and recipient is 'integral to the meaning of the photo-object in gestures that recapitulate or re-enact social articulations'.²⁸⁸ The album is an example of such a photo-object and the re-enactment of kinship that it performs. Val's use of the first person plural, 'we', and her intention to contribute more images to the album for her children and grandchildren; 'they'll have this, and I'll hopefully add to it, with – I've got some other photos, of Italian holidays, they're more recent, but they'll go in there at some stage', indicate the construction of heritage as a social

²⁸⁷ Hills de Zárte, 'Voice of the Object: Art Psychotherapy and Translating Cultures', Methodology Workshop on Migration, Mobility and Transgenerational Identity: Borders, Race, Ethnicity and Migration Network, University of Warwick, 16 March 2016.

²⁸⁸ Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photographs as Objects of Memory', in *Material Memories: Design and Evocation* (Oxford: Berg, 1993) p. 233, cf. Annemarie Money, 'Material Culture and the Living Room', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 7.3 (2007), 355-77 <DOI: 10.1177/1469540507081630> (p. 363).

and performative act; both born out of, and contributing to, a sense of community and kin. By adding her own visual story to the family album, and through many small, practical gestures such as studying the Italian language, making trips to her grandparents' villages in Italy, and preparing Italian food, the interpretation and transmission of heritage for Val emerges as a positive social and personal identity project: 'Well, we choose these holidays that do that specifically. To take you from place to place,' she responds to my comment that her most recent trip to Italy seemed quite a gruelling itinerary, 'it's really intense (.) you (.) hours in coaches, visiting, but (..). It's lovely. We love it. And of course I can practice my Italian! [*laughing*] Even if it is in only in the negozi locali!'

Considered together, Val's and Silvestro's accounts suggest that this perception of transmission is key to the significance of heritage: through material objects and embodied gestures heritage is understood as something that is received, and that is to be passed on. The experience of heritage is therefore akin to that of a gift, and for Val and Silvestro, recognising oneself as both recipient and donor of the gift of heritage is part of ongoing negotiations of subjecthood. The sense of attachment and duty constructed by the type of gift exchange that heritage represents is heuristic: it is creatively interpreted in practical actions and quotidian objects - an album of photographs, pizza dough, gestures, choosing to learn Italian, or training to become a pizzaiolo. In this way, the perceived gift of heritage enables the crafting of the past into a reference point of personal significance. The 'psychological resonance' that Davison identifies within the notion of heritage tallies with Val's recognition of the distance between the more direct Italian experience of her grandparents and her own conscious reception of an Italian heritage that must be deciphered and enacted in order to be meaningful. In this case, the implicit responsibility of the gift of heritage is productive, as Val's sense of duty – because of what she has received – is translated into a positive self-awareness and applied in conscious acts of reciprocity, as she herself becomes the bearer of Italian heritage for future generations.

For Val and Silvestro, heritage is therefore unequivocally a positive 'gift', but in the 'Writing Across Borders' workshops, the idea that heritage may represent a burden was expressed in relation to more painful memories and fixed idealizations of the

past.²⁸⁹ If we construe heritage as the gifting of the past, it is equally important to acknowledge the manner in which gifts can also ‘manipulate or humiliate, establish and maintain hierarchies’.²⁹⁰ The implicit obligation of reciprocity in gift exchange is not inherently positive. As Hyde puts it:

Because of the bonding power of gifts and the detached nature of commodity exchange, gifts have become associated with community and with being obliged to others, while commodities are associated with alienation and freedom. The bonds established by a gift can maintain old identity and limit our freedom of motion.²⁹¹

Though I did not encounter this amongst the participants in my study, Sprio offers a bleak portrait of the oppressive power of heritage which demonstrates in a very practical way how such bonds can work to constrain mobility and fix identities:

If I ever go into one of those old Italian cafes in the East End (of London), it feels like I’m in an Italian Neo-Realist film. The sadness, the familial tensions, with children who so obviously don’t want to really be working in the family business with their parents. Their suffering is felt in every cup of tea they pour and you know that they have felt like that since they have arrived in England in the 1950s. Their complexions are so pale, the poor things, and they never seem to be able to enjoy themselves. This is so different to the Italy that I know.²⁹²

The idea that heritage can be restrictive, perhaps even suffocating, has also been shown to be a recurring theme in Italian-American literature; the symbolic and material refusal of maternal Italian food in narratives such as Louise DeSalvo’s *Vertigo: A Memoir* stands in stark contrast to the romanticized view of ‘food from

²⁸⁹ ‘Writing Across Languages and Cultures’, organized by Naomi Wells and Jennifer Burns with Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, Sandwell Arts Café, West Bromwich, 12th-20th May 2015, and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 3rd February-22nd June 2016
<<https://writingacrossblog.wordpress.com/2016/03/06/workshop-2-heritage-wednesday-17-february-2016/>> [accessed 21 June 2017].

²⁹⁰ Hyde, p. xxvii.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 69.

²⁹² Sprio, p. 19.

home' that we examined in the previous chapter.²⁹³ This is perhaps because, as Sprio stresses, there has been historically only very limited cultural visibility of the Anglo-Italian experience, and so there simply is not the same entrenched culturally fêted romanticism to protest against.²⁹⁴ The association of gifts with community that Hyde points out is also supported by the fact that Val, uninhibited by the constraints of belonging to a bounded Anglo-Italian community, can choose liberally the desirable elements of her Italian heritage: perhaps because Val's mother was English, the discord that Sprio tracks in subsequent female generations of Italians in Britain; the strict rules and chaperoning they were subject to as symbols of the family's honour and respectability,²⁹⁵ are all entirely absent from Val's narrative. In the same way that Blackledge, Creese and Hu found that amongst their participants, 'the inheritance of the past was a resource from which to choose some features of heritage for the present and future, while leaving others in the past',²⁹⁶ the position of Val, like Silvestro, is one that enables the appropriation of some elements of Italian and Neapolitan identity from a 'secure' distance. We will now consider how this duality of distance/affect is implicated in personal heritage processes.

iii. 'Familiar strangers' and exchange-value: affect, distance and self-legitimation through reference to grandparents

In anecdotes in both Val's and Silvestro's accounts, grandparents emerged as important figures in which ideas of Italian and Neapolitan identity were concentrated. Simone Marino has described the grandparents' home as 'a generator of ethnic identity', the physical space where 'an idealization of Italian-ness appears to take place' for Italian-Australian third generation migrants.²⁹⁷ His depiction of the ways 'practices and emotions experienced at the grandparents' homes appear to be

²⁹³ Cinzia Scarpino, 'Ziti, Zeppoles, Gabagool: Italian American Food, Vertigo and Panic Attacks', paper presented at *The Raw and the Cooked in the history of Anglo-Italian Relations* conference, Università degli Studi di Milan, 9-10 November 2015, cf. Louise DeSalvo, *Vertigo: A Memoir* (New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2002).

²⁹⁴ Sprio, p. 19.

²⁹⁵ Sprio, pp. 122-37.

²⁹⁶ Blackledge, Creese, and Hu, 'Protean Heritage, Everyday Superdiversity', p. 2.

²⁹⁷ Simone Marino, 'Emotions in practice: reflections on the importance of the *nonni* in the construction and transmission of ethnic identity', in *Proceedings of The Australian Sociological Association Conference*, ed. by Theresa Petray and Anne Stephens, Cairns, 23-26 November 2015 <<https://www.tasa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Marino-2015.pdf>> [accessed 22 June 2017].

marked, embodied, and adapted into a personalized interpretation of ethnic identity by the younger family members' resonates clearly with the negotiation of Italian and Neapolitan heritage we have observed enacted by Val and Silvestro.²⁹⁸ Naomi Wells has found that the significance of grandparents is embedded in quotidian language use amongst third-generation migrant families in Chile; though they do not speak Italian, the grandchildren of Italian migrants to Valparaíso she encountered in her research have retained the Italian word for grandmother, 'nonna', rather than the Spanish 'abuela' (the more common term amongst Hispanic communities throughout the Americas).²⁹⁹ Similarly, in a literary context, Wren-Owens has read the desire of Welsh-Italian authors Anita Arcari, Hector Emanuelli and Victor Spinetti to embrace an Italian identity within the frame of 'Hansen's Law'; they are the third generation tasked with the 'redemption' and the 'reconstruction' of ethnic identity following its rejection by the second generation.³⁰⁰ In this section of the chapter, I want to build on these varied recognitions of *how* grandparents feature in migration/diasporic culture by querying *what is desirable*, beyond personal affect, or perhaps more accurately, what is upheld as 'valuable', and therefore exchangeable, about these inherited identities.

For Silvestro, the sentiments of gratitude, self-awareness and obligation related to heritage seemed to be tied to the figure of his paternal grandfather. When I asked Silvestro why he had chosen the name Sud Italia this prompted an animated account of his grandfather's experience of poverty, of struggle in the face of adversity, in which his grandfather was presented as an explicit point of reference in Silvestro's own life course:

Silvestro: E (.) quel nome là è come (..) è un orgoglio. Sud Italia è il sud. Io amo il sud, vengo del sud, e credo che il sud è sempre stato denigrato rispetto al nord. Per me è tutto uguale non c'è differenza; nord, sud. Però

²⁹⁸ Marino, p. 1.

²⁹⁹ Naomi Wells, 'Language and transgenerational identity in Chile's Italian community: Methodological and theoretical reflections', paper presented at AHRC Open World Research Initiative Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies conference, Highfield House Hotel, Southampton, 3 June 2017.

³⁰⁰ Wren-Owens, 'The delayed emergence of Italian Welsh narratives, or class and the commodification of ethnicity', p. 122.

in Italia si sente questo fatto. Invece no, noi siamo del sud ma guarda che facciamo. Capito?

Georgia: Forse in Inghilterra non si sente questo stereotipo negativo del sud? Magari i turisti inglesi quando pensano a Napoli, pensano più a (.) non lo so: (.) a Vesuvio, al mare, al sole =

Silvestro: = Alla Sicilia, alla Puglia, ci stanno tanti di quei bei posti =

Georgia: = Forse questo è più l'immagine che viene esportato qui?

Silvestro: In Italia è un po' diverso. In Italia se sei del sud, sei (.) quel poveraccio che fa i mercati (.) ò (.) io guarda sono contentissimo perché (.). Mio nonno, la decisione (.) che sto facendo (.) ho preso, prendere il truck invece di un ristorante, avrei potuto mettere i soldi da parte e chiedere aiuto a papà e cercare di fare un ristorante. Un ristorante a Londra ti viene a costare 5000 al mese, più o meno così, in una location quasi buona, diciamo. Ho scelto la strada perché mio nonno, quando aveva vent'anni-lui aveva già un figlio, e verso ventisei anni (..) lui vendeva la frutta per la strada, era figlio di un contadino (.) però non voleva fare il contadino quindi che faceva? Comprava (xxxxxx) la frutta e la vendeva al centro di Napoli perché io sono - la mia famiglia originariamente è di Sant'Antimo, vicino a Napoli, sei chilometri. Così prendeva la carretta, ci metteva mio padre, andava a vendere la frutta al centro di Napoli [smiles]. Mi racconta sempre questa storia. E:: lui, ha iniziato a vendere la frutta, poi piano piano comprava merce e:: vendeva ad altre persone e poi iniziava a comprare frutta ed a portarla a Pescara. Man mano che i miei zii si sono fatti grandi insieme al mio padre, a quindici anni [mio nonno] metteva mio padre sul furgone e lo faceva guidare fino a Pescara. E faceva vendere la frutta a loro. E pure loro dormivano sotto le bancarelle. E:: dopo un po', hanno cambiato, hanno iniziato a fare cose elettroniche, e là si sono fatti un po' più di soldi. E:: adesso mio nonno fa il pensionato, c'ha un palazzo di undici piani a Pescara. E allora ho detto: mio nonno ha fatto questo, io devo essere uguale. Senza che nessuno mi aiuti, lui non aveva nè madre nè padre perché sono morti quando erano giovani. Ho

detto se ci è riuscito mio nonno ci devo riuscire anche io. Seguo il mio nonno e non chiedo niente a nessuno mai. E ho fatto così, ho iniziato dalla strada. E piano piano spero di arrivare a fare qualcosa. Ecco perché si chiama Sud Italia perché ho iniziato dalla strada.

(Silvestro: And (.) That name there is like (..) it's pride. Sud Italia is the South. I love the South, I come from the South, and I think the South has always been put down compared to the North. For me it's all the same, North, South; there's no difference. In Italy you can feel it, though. But no, we're from the South and look what we can do. Do you know what I mean?

Georgia: Maybe in England we don't really have this negative stereotype of the South of Italy? English tourists when they think of Naples, they probably think more of (.) I don't know (.) of Vesuvius, of the sea, of the sun =

Silvestro: = Of Sicily, of Puglia, there are so many beautiful places =

Georgia: = I think perhaps that's more like the kind of image that is exported here?

Silvestro: It's a bit different in Italy. In Italy if you're from the South, you're (.) that poor bugger that works on the market (.) hey (.) I'm look I'm so happy because (.) My grandad, my decision (.) what I'm doing (.) the decision I've taken, get a van instead of a restaurant, I could have saved up money and asked help from my Da and tried to open a restaurant. A restaurant in London will cost you about 5000 a month, more or less, in a reasonable location, let's say. I chose the street because my grandfather, when he was twenty-he already had a son, and when he got to around twenty-six (..) he sold fruit on the street, he was a farmer's son, but he didn't want to be a farmer, so do you know what he did? He used to buy (xxxxx) fruit and sell it in the centre of Naples because I'm from - my family's originally from Sant'Antimo, near Naples, six kilometres away. So he'd get the cart, pop my Da on top, and go and sell fruit in the centre of Naples [smiles]. He always tells me this story. And he, he started to sell

fruit, then he bought other things and sold them to other people and then he started buying fruit to go and sell in Pescara. As my uncles got older, together with my Da, when he was fifteen, [my grandad] would take him in the van and let him drive to Pescara. And he got them all to sell the fruit too. And they'd sleep under the stalls. And after a bit, they spread out, they started selling a few gadgets, and then they started to make a bit of money. And now my grandad's retired, he's got an eleven-story apartment block in Pescara. And so I said to myself, my grandad did this, I have to do the same. Without any help from anyone, he didn't have a mother or a father because they died young. I said, if my grandad did it I can do it to. I follow his example and I never ask anyone for help ever. And so I started like that, on the street. And one day, slowly, I hope to build something. That's why it's called Sud Italia, because I started on the street.)

Val, like Silvestro, upholds her grandparents as embodied representatives of her inherited identity. She explains:

I always thought of my father as Italian. But (..) he grew to be more English as he got older. If that's making sense! But my grandparents (..) I mean they died when I was quite young (..) with my grandmother, I was about eight or ten when she died, my grandfather (..) I was probably about sixteen. And I always thought of them as purely Italian, because neither of them spoke particularly good English. Um (..) and life was always an Italian family way, when we were together with them. I mean, I can remember my Nonna, in the kitchen, always cooking and making pasta. My Nonno - Babà - my grandfather, was always dressed in his full black suit, with his hat, and his walking stick, with his pipe, um, talking Italian, and that's how I always related to him.

Val explained that the family language was English; though she grew up understanding Italian ('I was around Italian people all the time, and - it's like now, I can understand more than I can speak'), her father chose to speak to Val and her sisters in English rather than Italian, which Val ascribes to a wariness of a lingering anti-Italian sentiment in the immediate post-war period:

Val: My father's (.) attitude at the time, which was, post-war, after the Second World War, was to be *English*. Because as you know the Italians didn't fare particularly well in the first part of the Second World War, um, and then obviously when things changed for *them*, it got better *for* them. So I think my father's attitude was that: 'I've got to behave "English"'.

Georgia: Ok.

Val: To (.) be able to be accepted. That time, then. Because living round here was almost like living in Italy. So there was no um I mean we went to an Italian school, Italian Churches, Italian family and friends, and I think, um, the attitude was to become English. Because of that type of life with the, um, Second World War.

Val's account echoes many personal narratives of the concrete quotidian impact of the British government's decision in 1940 to intern 4,300 out of 20,000 Italians living in the UK as 'enemy aliens' (300 of which were British-born).³⁰¹ Without denying the traumatic impact of this verdict for Italian communities across the UK (not least those of the Welsh valleys following the well-documented torpedoing of the *Arandora Star*, which killed over 700 internees), Ugolini and Wren-Owens have noted that the paradigm of victimhood has become a dominant one in the memorialization of the Italian community in Britain.³⁰² Citing Mary Contini's 2006 family memoir, *Dear Olivia*,³⁰³ as a potential disruption to the overriding image of all Italians as 'innocent victims', Wren-Owens highlights how an idealized version of Italy and Italians during the Fascist years has been 'romanticized and celebrated uncritically' in recent memorialization campaigns.³⁰⁴ What is interesting when we consider Val's narrative alongside that of Silvestro, is the sense both accounts convey of *struggle* that, whilst not an immediately determining factor in the individual's identity, is insistently invoked. For Val, this sense of struggle is related to the prejudice directed towards her grandparents in the aftermath of World War II, whereas Silvestro's story

³⁰¹ Ugolini, p. 110, cf. Colpi, p.113, Fortier, p. 55. More recently, the novel *The Last Pier* (London: Hersperus Nova, 2015) by Roma Tearne offers a fictional exploration of the personal consequences of the internment of civilian Italian nationals.

³⁰² Ibid., and Wren-Owens, 'Remembering fascism', p. 77.

³⁰³ Mary Contini, *Dear Olivia* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006).

³⁰⁴ Wren-Owens, 'Remembering fascism', p. 86.

emphasizes his grandfather's struggle for social and economic security. In both narratives, this is very much an inherited awareness: Silvestro has never experienced the poverty which marked his grandfather's youth, and yet in interview he repeatedly sought to parallel their life trajectories, commenting 'mio nonno ha fatto questo, io devo essere uguale', ('my grandad did this, I have to do the same') and 'se ci è riuscito mio nonno ci devo riuscire anche io. Seguo il mio nonno e non chiedo niente a nessuno mai' ('if my grandad did it I can do it too, I follow his example and I never ask anyone for help ever'). Similarly, whilst on the whole Val had positive recollections of the Italian elements of her childhood, when I asked her what her classmates thought of her exciting summer holidays in Italy and the new Italian handbags she had mentioned flaunting on her return, she chose to emphasize the continuity with the struggle her grandparents had faced as 'outsiders':

Val: That was go::d, but, the minute anything went slightly wrong at school, or um, and you had a bit of a confrontation with any girls and boys at school, they would indicate that you were a foreigner.

Georgia: Ok.

Val: Because your name was that.

Georgia: (.) So it was in the background, less (.) as something negative?

Val: Yes. They would soon bring it up. Yep. Yep. 'Go back to Italy!'

Georgia: Oh really?

Val: Oh yes. 'Cause [then] I went to an English school – a Church of England School. But do you know what it never really (.) *bothered* me. Never really sort of – um – those days (..). Whereas today you think to yourself ooh, crikey, you know, you can't say that to anybody at schools nowadays.

Interestingly, Val also brought to her interview Besagni's *A Better Life* – another gift – which she had read to find out more about the Italian community her family had

been part of. As noted in the two previous chapters, one of the most cohesive elements of Besagni's assemblage of the narratives of Italian families in Clerkenwell is the theme of class struggle. This consciousness of struggle that emerged very clearly in both Val's and Silvestro's self-narration was also addressed directly by my informant Nadia, whose characterization of the different 'types' of Italians she encounters in various aspects of her daily life from establishing her theatre company, Tricolore, to temping for corporate firms in London's West End, was cited more extensively in the introductory chapter. The daughter of Italian migrants, Nadia identifies as Anglo-Italian and contrasted her own ideas and memories of Italy and the hardship faced by her grandparents with the 'corporate people':

Some are a little bit, you know, sort of, 'I'm a rich Italian' and it's a different type of Italian to Italians I would meet when I was a kid or you know my summer holidays in Italy who were very much working-class, in the village – my mother's from near Treviso which is half an hour away from Venice, and - but (.) in a village, and she's essentially from, you know, a very working-class family. So they're the kind of Italians that I love, cherish, and remember (.) and if that makes me a poor person it's a bit – I'm actually that kind of – that's the kind of Italian that I remember, that I know, that's the kind of Italian I am, it's who I am, you know. My grandmother(.). So in a way you've got, these self-made Italians, because my parents worked very hard to – to become middle-class, in a way, because my father never stopped working and my mother worked really hard.

I want to revisit Nadia's frank summary of the social topography of Italians in London as she sees it here because it reveals how her own sense of Italian identity is tied up with a class consciousness informed by intimate affection and a simultaneous sense of distance. Though raised in a middle-class environment that, as she explains, her parents laboured to create, *their* experience of financial hardship, and modest, rural origins, and Nadia's own memory of the family members, in particular her grandmother, that inhabited this landscape, profoundly inform her understanding of what it means to be Italian; 'if that makes me a 'poor' person it's a bit – I'm actually that kind of – that's the kind of Italian that I remember, that I know, that's the kind of

Italian I am, it's who I am, you know.' The repetition of 'remember' here seems to further reinforce the temporal as well as geographical distance of this class background – 'working class' and being 'poor' are associated with Italian-ness in Italy and with the past, not Italians in the UK in the present. At the same time, they are drawn into proximity as a powerful locus of affect, 'the kind of Italians that I love, cherish, and remember'.

Nadia's commentary exemplifies a tension we can read in these accounts between a compassionate identification with the hardships faced by previous family generations on the one hand and, on the other, the potential commodification of the struggles one's ancestors faced as ethnic or class 'outsiders'. I would argue that there is, after all, a hint of exoticism (returning to Femi's poem and the enticing, 'exotic tones' of the voices of the familiar strangers) in the portrait painted by these narratives of working-class Italian roots. I do not, in any way, want to challenge the intimate regard and admiration articulated in these claims of heritage, but I think it is also important to interpret, alongside these very personal sentiments, the desire to relate one's sense of self to the 'poorer lot' of the migrant and the working class within the broader frame of the established colonialist construct of personhood we reviewed in the first section of this chapter. We need to return here to how the appeal of the 'authentic' that we acknowledged briefly in the first section of this chapter was brought about through the colonialist distinction between 'civilized' and 'primitive'.

Drawing on Kahn's work on the construction of the British worker and identification of 'primitive phobia' and 'primitive mania', Skeggs highlights how the association of the working classes with primitive ideals – a connection which really became firmly established in the nineteenth-century – served to simultaneously value and devalue the working class, just as Orientalist discourse did the foreign Other.³⁰⁵ Indeed, as Back reflects, for the nineteenth-century 'social explorers' enquiring into the lives of the poor,

Urban poverty was an 'internal Orient' to be discovered and tamed. Connections between these urban voyages and colonial exploration were made clear by social commentators such as William Booth. Similarly,

³⁰⁵ Skeggs, p. 39, cf. Joel S. Kahn, *Modernity and Exclusion* (London: Sage, 2001).

George Sims in *How the poor live* – published in 1883 – spoke of his enquiry as a voyage of discovery that delved ‘into the dark continent that was within walking distance of the General Post Office’.³⁰⁶

Because the working class and the foreign were read by the middle class as being more primitive, elements of the culture of the latter could be ‘valued by some for being authentic and closer to nature, or devalued by others for proximity to nature that produced the threat to civilization’.³⁰⁷ Certain elements of these identities therefore become very desirable from a middle-class perspective: the inscription of the working class and foreign as ‘authentic’, through this perceived proximity to nature, counteracted the heinous crime of artifice.³⁰⁸ Emphasising working-class or migrant roots can offset the threat of ‘the ubiquitous critique of pretensions in European culture’, but evades acknowledgement of a social hierarchy and responsibility for the privileges afforded by a middle-class position.³⁰⁹ In this way, it is possible that migrant and working-class heritage claims can deny or trivialize present-day struggles.

Val comments that it is only now, looking back, that she would perhaps describe her upbringing as multicultural; ‘I didn’t recognise it as such then’. In hindsight, I have wondered whether other readers might interpret an accusatory tone in her explanation that, “‘multicultural” wasn’t really a very popular word then. It is now, because we have too many cultures to recognise’. Or whether, in her summary of the prejudice against Italians she experienced as a child in the 1950s, they might distinguish an unsettling lack of compassion towards the ‘you’ addressed: ‘when it was said, at our schools, you just let it go in one ear and out the other and out of your head. It was part of growing up – you’ve sometimes got to take those things on the chin and deal with it’. Re-reading these comments in the interview transcript, I was reminded of my surprise to find that many of the Italian workers at Old Spitalfields were pleased with the outcome of the Brexit vote (in the immediate aftermath, at least). I visited Sud Italia two weeks after the referendum when the result still

³⁰⁶ Back, p. 20, cf. C. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London – Third Series: Religious Influences* 5 (London: Macmillan, 1902).

³⁰⁷ Skeggs., p. 39.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 116.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 116.

dominated many conversations. Silvestro was not there, but when I spoke with other Italian stall-holders and employees, there was a genuine positivity about the result; 'If I could have voted, I would have voted to leave', another employee told me, 'Europe has ruined Italy, it's ruined the south, we pay so much and they give us no help - it'll ruin England too, because in the end they all want to come here'. There is a perturbing irony in these articulations of intolerance in that they come from those who would apparently seem best positioned to comprehend. And whilst it is easy to point the finger and denounce the implicit prejudice of this position, it seems more productive to try and understand how and why pride in migrant working-class heritage can be so easily mixed with a mistrust for those contemporarily implicated in comparable circumstances.

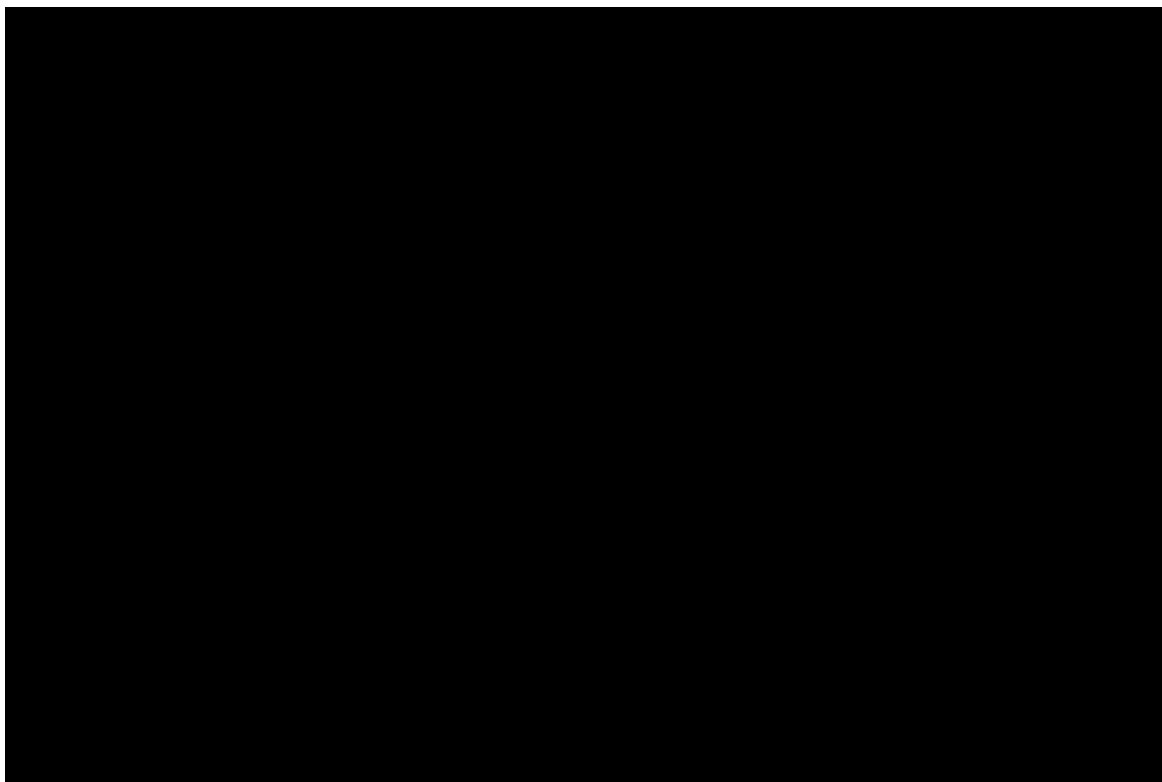
To this end, I think it is useful to compare these very circumscribed heritage claims which do not seem to allow space for the recognition of contemporary struggle with ostensibly more compassionate invocations of the past. In January 2017, Italian-American academic Anthony Tamburri's article 'When We Were The Muslims' related the fate of his grandmother as an Italian immigrant to America with U.S. President Donald Trump's order to block entry to America to citizens of Muslim countries; 'as all Italians were seen as violent and Mafiosi, now all Muslims are potential jihadists'.³¹⁰ Tamburri's protest in turn referenced Gian Antonio Stella's *L'orda: quando gli albanesi eravamo noi*, which sought, similarly, to evoke a more sympathetic understanding of the reality of migration today by drawing provocative parallels between current immigration to Italy and the celebratory master narrative of Italian emigration.³¹¹ Without querying the ethical intent of such gestures, we ought to acknowledge that the most immediate and certain beneficiary is the claimant: the primary consequence is the increase of *their own* symbolic capital (alongside the concrete economic remunerations of book sales, social connections, and cultural recognition afforded by these publications). When Tamburri, for example, emphasizes his working-class origins; 'raised in Stamford, CT (of Settefratese and Faetana origin), I grew up in its Italian working-class neighbourhood, where I was one

³¹⁰ Anthony Julian Tamburri, 'When We Were The Muslims', *La Voce di New York*, 29 January 2017, online: <<http://www.lavocedinewyork.com/en/news/2017/01/29/when-we-were-the-muslims/>> [accessed 16 May 2017].

³¹¹ Gian Antonio Stella, *L'orda: quando gli albanesi eravamo noi* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2012).

of the very few to go on for a doctorate',³¹² what resonates is *his* mobility, in terms of distance from the spaces he identifies, and the legitimation of *his* position as an 'authentic' voice - rather than its reflection in the working-class neighbourhoods of Stamford, which remain fixed. This is exchange-value. Again, without denying the moral aspirations of such identifications, nor less the very personal sentiment they contain, it is important to point out heritage claims exalt genealogical proximity in a way that implicitly underlines distance. In the personal narratives we have considered, this combination of proximity and distance legitimizes the mobility and the position of the claimant.

³¹² Tamburri, 'When We Were The Muslims', *La Voce di New York*, 29 January 2017, online: <<http://www.lavocedinewyork.com/en/news/2017/01/29/when-we-were-the-muslims/>> [accessed 16 May 2017].



Above: 'Il nostro Antonio ce l'ha scritto sulla pelle che è napoletano' ('Our Antonio has it written on his skin that he's Neapolitan'). Pizzaiolo at Sud Italia. Image Source: @sud_italia

Below: English Heritage plaque outside St. Peter's Italian Church.



iv. Chapter Conclusions

A picture is worth a thousand words, so goes the saying, and what image is more emblematic of the contradictory, protean, and selective nature of heritage than the claiming of St. Peter's Italian Church, built as a joint venture by the Catholic Italian and Irish immigrants to London in the mid-nineteenth century who lacked a place of worship in Protestant England, as '*English Heritage*'? Heritage claims are always invested teleological statements, a public articulation of private affects. I have suggested that we consider heritage as a gift to develop a framework through which we can conceptualize personal heritage claims and analyse why they are significant, how they function. By grounding this framework in contemporary and topical heritage documents, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the related ICH List, and drawing out the similarities between heritage as it is construed in these legislative documents and the principle of gift exchange, I have sought to establish premises that I believe have a wider relevance than the personal narratives considered here: the connection between the past as property and value, our understanding of the self, community attachment and obligation.

Examining heritage as the gifting of the past in the narratives of Val and Silvestro, connections with personal pasts are interpreted and celebrated in embodied gestures and quotidian practice, which informs life choices in the present, such as learning Italian or the artisan skill of making Neapolitan pizza. We can call this the use-value of heritage, because these are values that can only be known when put into practice. Through use-value, the reception of heritage becomes a meaningful life project, developing and reinforcing a sense of self and belonging in relation to the past. Observing the association between gift and community, I have highlighted how a shared investment in heritage, such as Silvestro's idea of Neapolitan identity, serves to bind together a collective. At the start of this chapter, I asked who stands to lose where heritage is concerned. Though the past was not considered a burden in Val's and Silvestro's accounts, I have sought to highlight that understanding heritage as a gift reveals its intimate connection with obligations and community. In Hyde's words, the bonds associated with heritage 'can maintain old identity and limit our freedom of motion'.³¹³

³¹³ Hyde, p. 69.

What we can do is consider who stands to gain, and how; I have suggested that what Val's and Silvestro's narratives indicate is how elements of Italian migrant working-class identity are upheld as desirable because they also have exchange-value. Silvestro and Val both uphold their grandparents as embodied representatives of Neapolitan and Italian identity, and in different ways, emphasize the struggle represented by ethnic and class difference. This struggle, distinct from Val's and Silvestro's own experiences, is not a factor used by others to place the individual, but is presented as an important feature of the Italy that the grandparents represent. I have related the value of working-class Italian heritage to a historical, colonialist, concept of personhood, which places worth upon 'the working class' and 'the foreign' as ideological constructs closer to the ideal of 'authenticity'; in this frame, heritage marks the mobility and legitimizes the position of the claimant by fixing others in place; it celebrates proximity from a safe distance.

What we see ultimately, I think, when we consider the interconnection of intimate affect – the use-value of the past, and its exchange-value in the form of self-legitimation – is that it is not possible to try and trace a neat line between affiliation and appropriation. The commodification of Italian working-class ethnicity is here thoroughly entangled with personal processes of meaning-making. In the next chapter, we will develop this investigation into the interlocking of personal affect and collective belonging, or the struggle to carve out one's place, with the commodification of classed, ethnic identities these heritage claims represent by shifting our focus to the appeal of the 'authenticity' of Italian culture in Britain.



Italian Regional Tourism Publicity Campaign at Bank Underground Station.

IV. Authenticity

Now it's just, well, the food scene is evolving, it's towards authenticity, quality products. You're not buying a dish, you're buying a lifestyle, I think. You're buying an experience. [...]. I walked into a friend's house and in his kitchen he has the widest collection of cookbooks I have ever seen in my life. He's a guy from London. I said, 'Why do you keep this many books in the kitchen? You can't possible have read them all!' 'They look good and sometimes I open one and I cook something'.

Giorgio, participant.

Authentic (adj). Made or done in the traditional or original way, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original: 'the restaurant serves authentic Italian meals'.

Oxford English Dictionary.

The value of 'the authentic' is inscribed in London's streets, with row upon row of ethnic restaurants proclaiming the authenticity of their products. 'WE ARE AUTHENTIC IN PUGLIA', block capitals bellow to commuters in a regional tourism campaign. Italy's image seems to marry well with notions of authenticity, whatever it may mean; The Oxford English Dictionary summons Italian food as an example of the authentic. As Giorgio indicates, there is also a flourishing contemporary market for high-quality folio format texts whose fine-looking covers and extensive descriptions of Italian life-as-lived enact a textual 'mise-en-scène' of authentic Italy; titles such as Emiko Davies's *Florentine: The True Cuisine of Florence*, the re-edition of Anna Del Conte's *Gastronomy of Italy*, Nigella Lawson's *Nigellissima: Instant Italian Inspiration*, and Rachel Roddy's *Five Quarters: Recipes and Notes from a Kitchen in Rome*, together with the ubiquitous Gino D'Acampo, dominate current best-seller lists.³¹⁴ In many

³¹⁴ At the time of writing, these texts were amongst the top ten bestsellers in the category of 'Italian food and drink' according to the sales figures of the online retailer 'Amazon': <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Best-Sellers-Books-Italian-Food-Drink/zgbs/books/271102/ref=zg_bs_nav_b_3_271072> [accessed 23 January 2017]. Other texts featured in the highest ranking, aside from those by D'Acampo which are dealt below (*Gino's Hidden Italy: How to Cook Like a True Italian*, and the highest-ranking text was *Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste of the Sun*), but worth acknowledging as distinct in style and implied reader from the texts I have cited here, are texts with a specific health or weight-loss focus, and, finally, the texts of British

ways, these texts can be seen as symbolic of the way in which personal affect, cultural identification and projects of economic self-realization are interlaced with the commodification of otherness. Consider, for example, Davies's introduction to *Florentine*:

A stroll through the city's streets – past pastry shops bustling with espresso-sippers, busy lunchtime trattorias, food vans selling tripe sandwiches and charming hole-in-the-wall wine bars – reveals how Florentines remain proudly attached to their unchanging cuisine, a cuisine that tells the unique story of its city, dish by dish. The Florentines, like most Italians, have a very important relationship with their food.³¹⁵

Davies's use of 'stroll', connotative of the *flâneur*, that confident figure of modern exploration and leisure, is resonant;³¹⁶ the cultural awareness presumed by a casual scattering of Italian (here, 'trattoria') without translation or explanation seems to address a reader versed in the kind of cultural knowledge that is, as Tammi Jonas discerns, 'usually more readily available to those with the economic capital to have travelled to the countries in question'.³¹⁷ It was noted in the last chapter how through the development of a European, colonialist model of personhood, the 'authentic' became associated with a particular kind of value. We might therefore read the appeal of this portrayal of traditional Florentine cuisine within a colonialist framework that posits the value of authentic in relation to middle-class identity. Indeed for Lisa Heldke, the search for authenticity represents a gastronomic means to 'encounter the unusual, unfamiliar, strange, exotic Other and to reflect on how this particular Other transforms our own identities'.³¹⁸ Construing gastronomy as a form of exoticism brings out clear parallels between the desirability of Italian cuisine in England today and the function Italy performed in the era of the Grand Tour as a

celebrity chef and restaurateur Jamie Oliver. Oliver's positioning regarding Italian cuisine merits specific attention and is also dealt with subsequently.

³¹⁵ Emiko Davies, *Florentine: The True Cuisine of Florence* (London and Melbourne: Hardie Grant Books, 2016), p. 9

³¹⁶ Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. by Micheal W. Jennings, trans. by Howard Eiland, Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone and Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006).

³¹⁷ Tammi Jonas, 'Eating the Vernacular, Being Cosmopolitan', *Cultural Studies Review*, 19.1 (2013) 117-37 (p. 130).

³¹⁸ Lisa Heldke, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 386.

‘useful and necessary’ point of reference for writers, as Ralph Pordzik suggests, as a contrast through which a sense of British identity has been developed.³¹⁹ Today, as Heldke points out, this quest for the other can be undertaken on a culinary level simply by visiting ‘ethnic’ restaurants in our own cities.³²⁰ In the same vein, anthropologist Isabelle de Solier identifies food as a key site of self-making amongst the educated middle class, in that it ‘allows them to retain a sense of moral propriety, a sense of themselves as culturalists, and a sense that they are not “real” materialist consumers’.³²¹ Food is ‘a material thing with a culturalist status’, de Solier reasons, explaining:

Unlike clothes or shoes, food *must* be endlessly replaced, yet it doesn’t accumulate: the goods are completely used up in the process of consumption. While it may accumulate on the body, there are moral dimensions to this too: over-consumption and obesity are associated with the lower classes, not with middle-class discipline and refinement.³²²

But to interpret Davies’s cookbook as the most recent refraction of the self/other construct embedded in the long history of Anglo-Italian relations, a way of asserting middle-class belonging, would be a very one-sided story. Writing herself from an ambivalent position (the author, we learn, is half Japanese, half Australian, with an Italian husband and daughter, and Tuscany has been “home” for over ten years), Davies’s depiction of Florentines ‘proudly attached’ to their cuisine highlights equally the value of authenticity for cultural ‘insiders’. Authenticity, after all, suggests Anne Goldman, offers the possibility to resist processes of hegemonization enforced by dominant culture.³²³ Following a similar line of argument, Jonas, observing what she calls ‘vernacular foodways’ (food-related practices attributed to a particular ethno-cultural group), stresses that sustaining the ideal of authenticity requires *both* ‘the

³¹⁹ Pordzik, p. 10.

³²⁰ Heldke, p. 393.

³²¹ Isabelle de Solier, ‘Making the Self in a Material World: Food and Moralities of Consumption’, *Cultural Studies Review*, 19.1 (2013), 9-27 (p. 16).

³²² de Solier p. 16., cf. Samantha Kwan, ‘Individual versus Corporate Responsibility: Market Choice, the Food Industry, and the Pervasiveness of Moral Models of Fatness’, *Food, Culture and Society*, 12.4 (2009), 477-95.

³²³ Anne Goldman, ‘“I Yam What I Yam”: Cooking, Culture, and Colonialism’, in *De/Colonizing the Subject*, ed. by Sidonie Smith and Julie Watson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. 169-95.

cosmopolitan “identity grazing” of the various outsiders’ and the ‘intense parochialism of the insider’.³²⁴ Specifically in the context of migration, Jonas counterbalances the essentialist connotations of seeking out authentic practices with the utility of authenticity in tactical terms: ‘it is a way for migrants to strategically mobilise their own ethnic identities in order to accrue economic capital from the outsiders who seek it’.³²⁵ During interview, food and hospitality management consultant Giorgio grounded Jonas’s observations in the context of contemporary European mobility (and xenophobia) in London:

I was in a pub in Crouch End last week, watching a stand-up comedian and he said that you have a very simple policy for admitting people from abroad. If they can cook, they can stay. He was hilarious but in a way, it’s true.

The ideal of authentic Italian cuisine can thus be seen as one of the sites in which essentialized, exoticized notions of the other are entangled with ‘insider’ affect and sense of cultural belonging, not to mention the possibility of tangible financial gain. This chapter is concerned with the implications of this mutual but contradictory investment in the appeal of authenticity as played out in practice. We will focus on a very visible example of an Italian migrant who indeed can cook, and stayed, celebrity chef and television personality, Gennaro ‘Gino’ D’Acampo, dubbed ‘the nation’s favourite Italian chef’,³²⁶ and SharedCity, a company offering ‘authentic’ walking tours and food experiences in London, as case-studies of the commodification of Italian otherness. The chapter asks: what opportunities does authenticity offer, in what way is it appealing, who claims it, and at what cost?

We will begin with an investigation of SharedCity that takes us back to Terroni and London’s historic Italian quarter, this time to reflect on how the symbolic function of this space as a marker of cultural authenticity is used, queried, and ultimately celebrated as a site of sociality by a commercial enterprise. The second half of the

³²⁴ Jonas, p. 128.

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 132.

³²⁶ From the online retailer ‘Amazon’ description of *Gino’s Hidden Italy: How to Cook Like a True Italian* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2016), at the time of writing the highest-rated text in the category of ‘Italian food and drink’, based on sales figures <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ginos-Hidden-Italy-cook-Italian/dp/1473646480/ref=zg_bs_271102_2> [accessed 23 January 2017].

chapter offers a close critical examination of what is defined as D'Acampo's 'performance' of authenticity; drawing on the nuances of Michel de Certeau's definition of the tactic, I examine D'Acampo's positioning as a strategic performance and consider the implicit consequences of his embodiment of a stereotyped Italian identity. The chapter makes use of range of materials; cookbooks and cookery programmes, visual, print and social media, description and interview quotation, to analyse the various competing values projected onto the ideal of the authentic and to map the conflicting implications of authenticity as it is promised, packaged and fostered by SharedCity and D'Acampo. Through a simultaneous focus on use-value; the authentic as a site of personal affect and social encounter, *and* its worth in exchange, including economic mobility, I argue for a critical interpretation of authenticity in terms of sociality.

i. Authenticity as 'accepting how a community lives its daily life'

At SharedCity, a small London company operating walking tours of the city's 'diverse cultural communities', the price of authenticity starts at £20.³²⁷ Founded in 2013 by friends Deborah Chatterjee, Nidhi Ferwerda and Caroline Bourn, this is an enterprise literally premised on the value of the authentic. In exchange for £20, SharedCity promises:

A truly authentic trip to London's Little Italy. We start with a visit to St Peter's Italian church hidden in the heart of old Italian Clerkenwell. After seeing the church, your Italian (well half Italian!) guide Deborah, will tell you about the history of the community, give you a tour of the historic streets and then take you to the Italian Social Club, to join a group of very friendly retired community members for a delicious caffè, antipasti and pastries (included in ticket price!). SharedCity is about travelling the world without leaving London!³²⁸

This short description of the company's Little Italy Tour as advertised on the SharedCity website encapsulates the three themes I will focus on in this section of

³²⁷ SharedCity, online <<http://www.sharedcity.co.uk>> [accessed 29 March 2017].

³²⁸ 'SharedCity Little Italy Tour', online: <<http://www.sharedcity.co.uk/booking>> [accessed 29 March 2017].

the chapter. I will begin by considering the idea of 'travelling' in search of the 'truly authentic' - who is targeted by this search for the 'genuine'? Secondly, we will critically examine the presentation of culture offered by the experience of SharedCity; we will see how the description of Deborah as 'Italian (well half Italian!)' is reflective of the way in which the company can be seen to simultaneously reinforce and problematize understandings of culture as a bounded, fixed, entity. Finally, noting how the consumer is invited to 'join' a 'friendly' community, we will study the social nature of authenticity as it is presented in this context.

We have already established how the appeal of authenticity can be related to class, specifically to a middle-class desire to distance the self from artifice and materiality. This link between the demand for authenticity and a middle-class position is borne out by Deborah's portrait of the company's 'typical' client. At the start of our first recorded interview,³²⁹ Deborah, who is the co-founder and director of SharedCity as well as the guide for the 'Little Italy' tour, emphasized authenticity as key to the growing success of the business, suggesting that 'people in London are very spoilt with the quality of food that they get now' so they are 'after authenticity'. She clarified:

When we have people helping us with marketing or businessmen on tours they're always asking us you know 'who is your target audience' or 'demographic' and I think we've realized that um like I'd say in general, it tends to be, if I had to go for the stereotype, I'd say that it's probably sort of like in general educated, well-travelled people, who are interested in other cultures, probably *Guardian* readers, that would be the demographic.

Beverley Skeggs has wryly commented, faced with today's 'global search for finding, making and selling the "authentic experience", frequently a search for the "genuine"', that 'experience is the only thing left to buy for those who are materially sated'.³³⁰

³²⁹ 12th October 2016, Hilly Fields, London. See 'Introduction' for further participant and interview details.

³³⁰ Skeggs, p. 106. Consider also Skeggs's assertion that 'one of the greatest marketing achievements of contemporary capitalism is the ability to sell 'non-materialism' to consumers through material practice. This distaste for concern with status and appearance has long been promoted as a position for middle-class consumers by marketing strategies in the advertising industry', Skeggs p. 106, cf. Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

Linda Lapiņa coins the expression ‘diversity tourism’ to describe how ethnic difference and poverty can be claimed for middle-class consumption as ‘entertaining, inspiring, transforming reality’.³³¹ The idea of ‘diversity tourism’, with its emphasis on the ‘entertainment value’ of diversity (and diversity as ethnic difference), seems an accurate way to describe the experience SharedCity offers. ‘We take groups to explore warm and wonderful people and hidden places within this astonishing city’, the website promises; ‘Get Exploring’, ‘Teach Kids Multicultural Stuff’.

Yet, whilst there are images which conform to stereotyped visions of ‘other cultures’, the SharedCity website site seems to have an equal visual emphasis to the exotic and the everyday (to give an idea, some of the photographs that the rolling banner on the home page feature are a bare-chested Asian man, a blonde girl with a plastic pint glass, children in traditional Islamic dress in an unremarkable grey concrete street, and supermarket shelves – the viewer who is not familiar with Chinese characters can read only the guarantee that the mysterious stacked cans contain that contemporary universal cure-all, Omega 3). ‘Believe it or not, all the pictures above are taken in London’, the accompanying text reminds us, conceivably anticipating our disbelief at the image of a glowing, intricately carved Jaisalmer limestone Hindu temple (Ealing Road), promising perhaps less an exploration of the unknown, and more an invitation to query the distinction between the familiar and the unfamiliar.

The blurring of notions of familiar/unfamiliar and insider/outside is reflected in the broader range of consumers who have attended SharedCity tours. In addition to the middle-class appeal of SharedCity that Deborah identifies, she also gave examples of a variety of ‘insider’ interests:

We did a dance workshop, an Indian classical dance workshop for kids a couple of years ago in October half term and we had a dad come along with his children and he was Indian but had actually grown up in Australia and was now living in London and the reason he came along was because

³³¹ Linda Lapiņa, ‘Paradoxes in being “at ease” with diversity in a Copenhagen district’, *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 6.1 (2016), 33-41, DOI: <<https://doi.org/10.1515/njmr-2016-0002>> (p. 39).

he said 'My children are so out of touch with my heritage that I kind of I want them to do things like this so they know that it's part of their culture' so it's, it's things like that, yeah, people who feel they've lost touch with their culture a bit and really interesting. I mean you wouldn't think this but we like so um actually one of the more popular tours is the Islamic tour and I think because it's such a topical subject people really want to know more about it and (.) on one trip there was a Muslim lady from New York who was visiting her daughter in London and I said to her daughter I'm really intrigued why your Mum's come on this tour because surely she knows a lot about Islam and she said oh you know we love doing it, going to visit other mosques around the world, and we've had a rabbi's daughter from New York go on the Jewish tour, and I think sometimes people just want to see how their culture or religion is represented in another country, especially somewhere like London that is so global, you know all sorts of reasons, sometimes people just want to do something a little bit you know different.

What we can interpret therefore in SharedCity is an attempt to strike a balance between the commodification of culture and a meaningful engagement with diversity. In Deborah's words:

Really one of our aims is to break down multicultural barriers because you know if you ask people what they like about London inevitably loads of people say 'it's so multicultural' but actually their experience of those cultures is very superficial, it might just be going to an Indian restaurant or buying their veg from a Turkish shop.

So *how* does SharedCity try to effect this balance? What exactly is sold in the name of authenticity? When I asked Deborah how she defined 'authentic', she suggested it was 'accepting how a community lives its daily life', continuing later in interview:

Actually what's interesting is that when we go on SharedCity tours um for example part of the Italian meal might be a bit of (.) on the cheese platter, they might (.) so this is when we go on a Sunday, we have more *antipasti* type of food, when you came it was a lunch – and so there's some bread

and different cheeses, and there was Cheddar cheese and French bread and there's that kind of reaction like, 'Oooh this isn't very Italian', and then it's (.) it's sort of saying to people, but actually this is what Italians in London eat now, it's (.) it's been integrated into their food (.) I remember when we did the first Norway trip, I checked with the Church what was on the menu and they said oh this Sunday we're going to have lasagna and I said oh that's not very Norwegian [*both laugh*] and the response was 'well that's what we eat in Norway'. And I think that's really interesting, that actually people have got this idea in their head of what people from other cultures eat and you know you go to India, people are eating fast-food, that's becoming part of their culture, and it's (.) it's trying to find that kind of balance.

The practical opportunities and ethical issues that arise in relation to this balance between commodification and engagement are, as I have noted, exemplified in Deborah's understanding of the role of guide: her own identification as 'half Italian' may be read as representative of the wider issues at stake. On the one hand, SharedCity's insistence on the use of guides who identify as cultural 'insiders' is in line with an ethical imperative to privilege the perspective of those from within the community. Clearly, there is real promise for community engagement here, and in fact Deborah explained that some of the guides who lead SharedCity tours had first arrived in the UK as refugees who Deborah had worked with in a previous role teaching in migrant communities. She defended the choice to have guides from within the community emphatically:

Something that we are really mindful of, and this is why we make sure that our guides have a connection to that community so you (..) I'm half Italian, I grew up going to that Church, I mean not every Sunday but weddings, Christmas, Easter, so, I've got that connection. What we don't want is to have that kind of fish-bowl effect, look how these people live, and I think I was really aware of that when (..). So we've got a 'little Peckham – Lagos' tour, in Peckham, and the tour guide is from that community, and it was really interesting because we were going around together doing a recce, and I was taking photographs, and people were a bit funny with me like 'on no you can't take photographs', and I think because it is quite a closed

community, sometimes they can be a bit sceptical about outsiders, like they're on display, but actually when my friend stepped in and said oh she's with me, they let down their guard a bit so I think that's really important, we're really mindful that we don't want it to be like 'oh look how exotic these people are', the idea behind it is that the guide is saying, look I grew up being part of this community, this is what we're all about, and kind of sharing it so that's very important actually.

However, it is important to recognise that more nuanced understandings of culture and the plurality of voices that form part of a community risk being obscured under the authority of one sole voice that is purported to be representative. Insistence on guides 'from the community' can reinforce bounded ideas of culture as travelling genealogically, with clear-cut lines of who belongs and who does not. For example, of the 'Circolo della Terza Età', the Italian Senior Citizens' Social Club that we attended as part of the tour, Deborah claimed:

That is the authentic, original, Italian community. Of course I mean I do know there are plenty of Italians that do live in Chelsea but those are kind of new people coming in but all those people you saw in the Italian club their grandparents and their parents came over.

Similarly, conceptions of culture as an easily identifiably fixed set of practices risk being bolstered by an apparently pedagogic emphasis on ascertaining precisely what a community actually does and why – Deborah suggested, 'it's really just getting to know other communities and understanding them so people kind of say, oh now I know why people from that community do that or maybe dress that way or whatever'.

When I took part in my first 'Little Italy' walking tour, I was initially acutely conscious of my own position as a diversity tourist. We met in Terroni and it felt very odd to be hearing about when Italians first came to London as the Terroni staff and customers, some of whom I was familiar with due to my ongoing participatory observation of the site, went about their daily business. Very quickly, however, Deborah actively sought to encourage a very fluid understanding of Italian culture. This was facilitated by the liminality of her own position, both in terms of her experience being identified as 'half Italian'; 'my skin colour and surname held me back from saying I was English. With

no other useful vocabulary, I stuck with a cumbersome explanation: “My mum’s Italian and my Dad’s Indian,” she has explained in a blog about ethnicity and bureaucracy, ‘the only time I can confidently say: “I am British” is when I’m abroad as nobody can ignore my intentionally hammed up plummy accent’,³³² as well as her relationship with the community. Though she ‘grew up going to that Church’, Deborah was not part of the pensioners’ club that we ate with, something made clear when one of the groups’ members who was in charge of the raffle draw in fact joked that there were some ‘young intruders’ in attendance, referring to Deborah, myself, and the other tour participants. Similarly, language use – although not a barrier – distinguished Deborah from the Italian Social Club, as she appeared more comfortable in English and hesitant in Italian, whereas members of the Club tended to use Italian as a medium of communication, switching into English only when speaking to the other members of the tour group who didn’t speak Italian. All the members of the group I spoke to were however fluent in English and I was struck by their strong London accents.

The sensory engagement privileged by the format of the walking tour is also in itself significant. Regarding the depiction of walking in texts by migrant writers in Italy, Burns has identified the constructive potential of walking for ‘opening up and developing spaces’ in a mode which ‘heightens intensely the intimacy of contact between individual and urban fabric’.³³³ In a walking tour, this kind of intimate knowledge is acquired through the mediator of the guide. By illuminating hidden aspects of the city to participants in the tour and explaining the meaning of particular sites, the guide is charged with the authority to read the city as a palimpsest and direct the understanding of the diversity tourists. De Certeau’s comments the similarities between walking and travel are revealing here, too:

Travel (like walking) is a substitute for the legends that used to open up space to something different. What does travel ultimately produce if it is not, by a sort of reversal, ‘an exploration of the deserted places of my

³³² Deborah Chatterjee, ‘Why Ethnic Minority Forms Suck For Mixed Race People’, *The Blog Huffingtonpost UK* 22 April 2016, online: <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/deborah-chatterjee/ethnic-minority-forms-for-mixed-race-people_b_9749302.html> [accessed 16 June 2017].

³³³ Burns, pp. 134-35.

memory', the return to nearby exoticism by way of a detour through distant places?³³⁴

In some ways, the tour did indeed become an investigation of sites of private affect. As Deborah invited us to explain the reasons for our interest in the tour, a variety of identifications emerged: E. was tracing the Italian origins of his family. His mother had lived in the area but had been bombed out of her home during the Blitz, a story which led B., another participant, to recount that she was French but of Polish origin – her father had renounced his Polish citizenship to fight for the French Army in the Second World War. L.'s ex-husband was Italian; she explained that she wanted to maintain a sense of continuity with Italy for her son. As we explored the streets of Clerkenwell and E. explained where his mother had lived, the past was rendered both present – a display of shiny red Vespas in a scooter dealership evoking another type of 'authentic Italy' – and personal. This seemed to be very much a social encounter, an impression that was reinforced as the group moved to the Italian Social Club to share lunch with a group of pensioners who meet weekly in the rooms above the Church.

Here, there was a very clear sense that it is the community who directs the extent and nature of the involvement of the 'diversity tourists'. The regular members of the Social Club have their own set dining places each week and we were seated in the spaces amongst these; we were quite literally put in our place. Before eating, we were asked to pray for those affected by a recent train crash in Puglia. Padre Andrea, the parish priest of St. Peter's (the Club is attached to the Church), then set a more jovial tone for the meal by proclaiming 'well, it is the last time we will meet for the summer. It is, in effect, our last supper'. As chatter broke out, we were asked almost immediately why we had wanted to come to the lunch – if we had Italian family or who we knew - which gave me a keen sense that the roles had been muddled and we, the diversity tourists, were the observed, as we had to explain why we were there or 'whose daughter I was'. In interview subsequently, Deborah stressed that all the tours are based on the requirements stipulated by members of the communities visited.

³³⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 107.

[In some of the communities we visit] the churches are crucial to that community and so the church is part of the experience so if you want to experience that culture you've got to experience the church. And actually so we when we were talking earlier about people maybe kind of grumbling a bit complaining something that we have had but it was done in a friendly way it wasn't kind of oh I want my money back but you know people have said oh, that church service was a bit long and it was in Norwegian as well and the thing is the community have made it clear to us, we'd love you to come here and experience lunch with us and it's a really laid back church, really nice, but you have to be part of our church service, it's not like just rock up for the lunch bit. If you want to experience our culture, you've got to be part of the service and actually (..) I don't speak Norwegian (..) the church is beautiful, the singing is amazing, great people watching, and I love just sitting there and you know looking around and listening to the singing, I mean the church is amazing, but we warn people, like if you want to come to this tour be prepared to sit for forty-five minutes in (..) it's a Lutheran service (..) but actually it's really interesting comparing it to other church services that we've been to. So anyway we've had a couple of people who haven't read the blurb and have said oh, that was a bit long and we've said, well that's why we're welcomed into the community because we're part of their church service. So actually I think that's a lot to do with authenticity that in a way you can't sort of pick and choose, the communities say to us you have to be a part of this.

Most interestingly, any preconceived idea of authenticity seemed to have gone out the window. Downstairs in Terroni, the tour group had learned that pasta came in over three hundred different shapes and discussed their use in different Italian dishes and regional cuisine. Upstairs in the Social Club, a plate of cheddar cheese, French-style baguette and hummus (a vegetarian option) seemed in no way to undermine the 'authenticity' of the encounter. As Deborah put it:

I think some people might want kind of like slick like a five star experience of that country and actually you don't get that I mean the Italian Social Club for example it's not as if it's this sort of swanky plush you know like

beautiful Italian women drinking aperol spritzes no it's not like that so if people are after that, we're the wrong (.) er place.

A dish that appeared by most standards very un-Italian did not dint the enthusiasm of the other tour participants at interacting with a 'secret enclave' of a lively Italian community. 'You'd have no idea this was here, would you', E. mused aloud at one point as he was given a glass of prosecco to toast to one of the member's birthdays. His neighbour, who I had only heard speak in Italian up to this point, raised her glass and said in a decisively London lilt, 'Well now you know, you can come back and find us can't you?'. At my open, surprised smile, which must have been read as a lack of comprehension, she opened her palms, 'ci vieni a trovare?', nodding to check if I had understood. Through moments like this and general interaction with the regular attendees, I also had a sense that this was a positively affirming experience for the members of the Social Club. In particular, one of the regular members, D., who joined our table as people filtered in seemed to really share E.'s pleasure at the realization that D.'s family were actually featured in the collection of Italian oral histories that E. was reading (incidentally, Besagni's text). Deborah confirmed this impression, 'Oh, yeah, they absolutely, really really love it. I think they are so proud of their community and actually I think they're quite chuffed that people just want to find out more about it'.

My second visit to the Italian Social Club was in December and largely followed the same format, with the addition of dancing and singing. This visit was on a Thursday, when many of the Neapolitans attend the Social Club, and I had been forewarned by D. that the atmosphere could get very animated. Another club member, listening to our conversation suggested that, being Southerners, they were 'good people but a bit rough' ('sono bravi, per carità, ma sono un po' grezzi'), confirming the enduring currency of the stereotypes Silvestro invoked in the last chapter, and a point we will explore more fully in the following one. All the tour participants were vigorously 'encouraged' to take part in dancing after the meal had finished, accompanied to the floor by the most enthusiastic dancers to waltz to famous Italian songs; again, the 'observers' became the 'observed'. There seemed to be an ostensible emphasis on the *lack* of performance, 'it's like this every week, they're a crazy lot', smiled one of the regular members as I was returned to my seat after a whirlwind dance session. I had been seated next to S, who had only recently started attending the club. She did

not live locally and had grown up in Soho (another area of London which had a large Italian population, reported in several counts to have an amicable rivalry with the Clerkenwell Italians).³³⁵ In conversation, S. repeated several times that she was really happy that her friend had insisted she join, that it was a nice way to break up the week and always a warm atmosphere even though she didn't really know the other members well yet. At that time, the charity AgeUK was running an extensive advertising campaign on the Tube with the slogan 'No-one should have no-one', which, after listening to S., Deborah invoked in contrast to the social atmosphere of the Club. This relates to my overriding impression, looking back on both the tours I attended; one of movement and sociality. The photographs I took on both tours hint at this fluid sociality (unintentionally, admittedly, as I was keen to try and capture things as they happened), with Londoners going about their present lives stepping or cycling into shots of the remaining material traces of Clerkenwell's Italian past and the blurred motion of dancing.



Table set for lunch at the Circolo della Terza Età.

³³⁵ Fortier p. 141, cf. Sponza 1988 and Colpi 1991.



A member of the Circolo shares his family history with SharedCity tour participants.



SharedCity participants dancing with Circolo members after lunch at the Social Club.

I use the word ‘sociality’ after Georg Simmel, to refer to a sense of a consequential awareness of others rather than the pleasure of feeling part of an intimate community.³³⁶ Though the Club itself was certainly a very social place in the more common sense, I think the significance of the wider experience of SharedCity is in its role as forum in which people who often have very different perspectives can meet and, for a short space of time, engage with each other in perhaps ultimately a more meaningful manner. This is not some rosy vision of participants and community

³³⁶ Richard Sennet, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (London: Allen Lane, 2012; London: Penguin, 2013), p. 38, cf. Georg Simmel, ‘The Metropolis and Metal Life’, trans. by Kurt Wolff, in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. by Donald Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 324-9, and Kurt Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950).

members skipping off into the sunset arm-in-arm at the end of the tour (though interestingly, the latest SharedCity newsletter proudly announced the first 'SharedCity marriage' between a tour participant and a member of the Norwegian community who had met on a 'Little Norway' tour),³³⁷ but a more complicated - and thus perhaps more valuable - form of mutual awareness. Richard Sennet describes the productivity of this type of social engagement using literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the 'dialogic'; 'though no shared agreements may be reached, through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of one another', writes Sennet, suggesting that

The subjunctive mood is most at home in the dialogical domain, that world of talk which makes an open social space, where discussion can take an unforeseen direction. The dialogic conversation, as noted, prospers through empathy, the sentiment of curiosity about who other people are in themselves. This is a cooler sentiment than sympathy's often instant identifications, yet empathy's rewards are not stone-cold. By practising indirection, speaking to one another in the subjunctive mode, we can experience a certain kind of sociable pleasure: being with other people, focusing on and learning about them, without forcing ourselves into the mould of being like them.³³⁸

We can track this type of dialogic engagement in the guides' active solicitation of questions from participants:

Actually what we encourage people to do is to say oh look ask me anything. I mean when we have the India tours our guides get asked loads of things about arranged marriages, why do you do this and why did Indians come over in the first place [...]. We *want* people to ask just very open questions.

And, crucially, in the space SharedCity allows for disagreement and conflicting interpretations:

³³⁷ SharedCity newsletter, June 2017.

³³⁸ Sennet, p. 23.

You sit down in the Club and someone sits down and just contradicts what I've said I mean not that they've heard what I've said but oh 'the Italians came over in(.)' and it was like two decades out from the date that I'd given, and 'oh it was the Irish that built the Church' [...]. And actually not saying so when he said that, I didn't say oh my god, he's wrong don't listen to him, I say, you know, like maybe we're both right, you know people have different - I mean unless it's a specific battle, you're talking about, that happened on a specific date - people are always going to say you know [...]. So I was having a dialogue with him and I think sometimes it's just (..) I mean he's not a historian, and I'm not, so we're coming to it from two different perspectives and it's what people have learnt.



Italian traces on the SharedCity tour: Laystall St., Clerkenwell. In 1864 Giuseppe Garibaldi met Giuseppe Mazzini here to address members of the newly formed 'Mazzini-Garibaldi Italian Working Men's Society'.



Italian traces on the SharedCity tour: Organ Builders on Back Hill, Clerkenwell.

SharedCity can in this way be appreciated as a practical example of the way in which the ideal of authenticity as an exoticized otherness is interwoven with the possibility of meaningful social encounter; an encounter which, as we have seen, has the potential to ultimately undermine the essentialized otherness on which it is premised. There is of course, too, the issue of profit. For a small company like SharedCity, it seems important to maintain a complex and delicate balance which benefits both the enterprise and the communities involved financially. Deborah explained, for example, that the price of the tour ensures that the guides can be paid regardless of how many people turn up, and that the communities set a fee for SharedCity's participation dependent on the experience they offer (some tours include more elaborate meals and experiences than others). SharedCity's promise of promoting community engagement was also borne out by the fact that Deborah encouraged me to contact the Italian Social Club directly, having attend the tour, about my project, rather than go through her as a medium. The broader questions of just what there might be to gain in the desirability of authenticity; by whom, and at what price, merit, however, further consideration. This is an issue that often leads into a discussion of rights; who

can claim authenticity, who is *entitled* to profit financially from the production of ethnic cuisine, for example. But asking those types of questions - or suggesting who *should* be able to claim authenticity - doesn't really bring us any closer to how such claims actually play out, and what they imply. To undertake this type of inquiry, we need to take a step back and examine the more subtle consequences of what it means to be 'heard' on account of the authenticity of one's voice. To do so, we will consider one of the most audible Italian personalities in the UK, celebrity chef and TV star Gennaro 'Gino' D'Acampo.

ii. 'If they can cook, they can stay': a case study of Gino D'Acampo

We have already seen how de Certeau's description of the 'space of a tactic' in *The Practice of Everyday Life* through terms like 'other', 'foreign', 'mobility', 'weak' is a striking echo of the practical experience of many migrants. I would like now to concentrate more closely on the exchange-value of authenticity in light of de Certeau's identification that the tactic is 'the art of the weak'; specifically, how far and in which ways a 'performance' of the authentic can be capitalized on by those who claim it.

The commercial success of D'Acampo makes him an interesting case study because his self-realization in socio-economic terms is tied up in claims to authenticity - in what I would call a performance of authenticity. I am not suggesting here that his behaviour is an overt pretence; instead I would like to develop the misgivings Tim Edensor has expressed regarding Judith Butler's division of performance (the self-conscious display of behaviour) and performativity (the construction of identity through everyday communication and behaviour).³³⁹ Refuting Butler's clear-cut distinction between performance and performativity, Edensor reasons that 'apparently self-reflexive performances may become unreflexive "second nature" to the habituated actor, and unfamiliar surroundings may provoke acute self-awareness of iterative performances where none had previously been experienced'.³⁴⁰ These reflections are particularly pertinent to the context of migration, and I think D'Acampo's positioning cannot be read separately from his lived experience of

³³⁹ Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p. 71; cf. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

³⁴⁰ Edensor, p. 71.

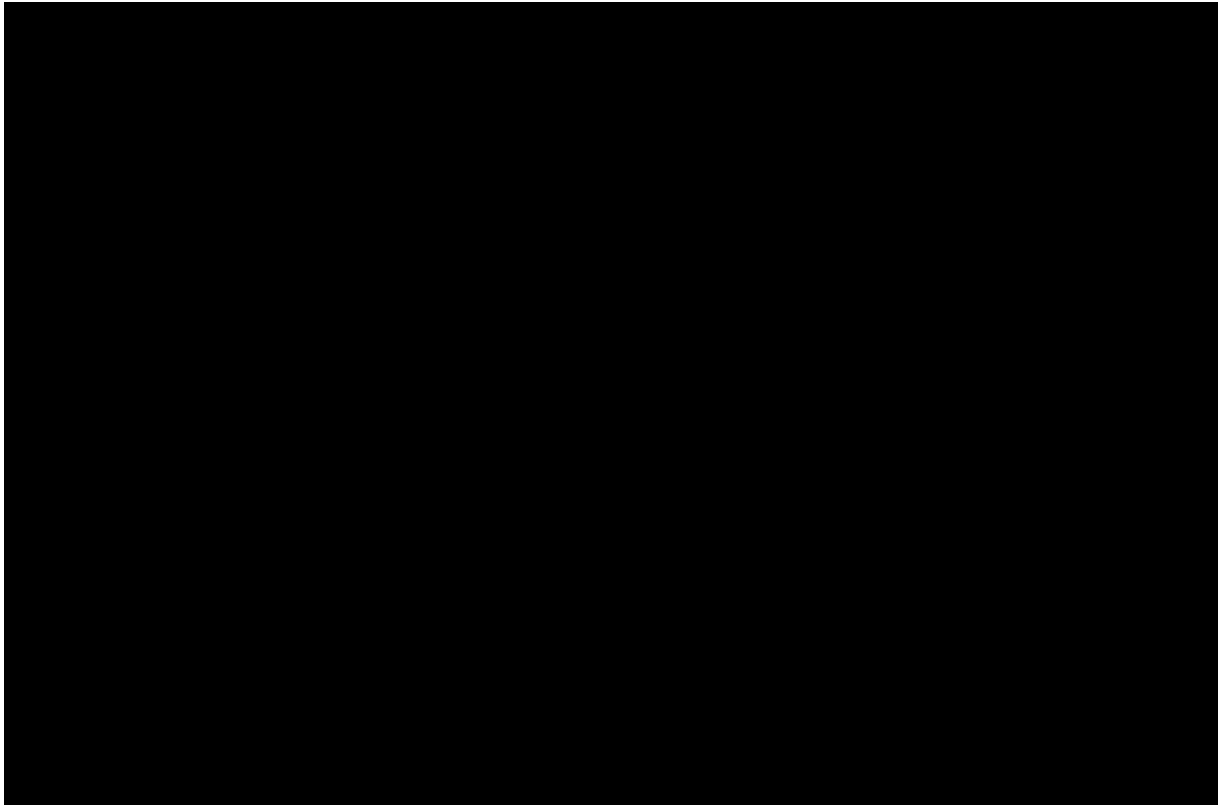
mobility, whereby a whole host of unremarkable quotidian behaviour in his home region (communicating with hand gestures, greeting a male friend with kisses and a 'uè bello' - 'hey beautiful' - or taking a tooth-brush in a small plastic case to work) in England suddenly becomes conspicuous, invites comment, and prompts, precisely as Edensor describes, 'an acute self-awareness' of his Italian identity. I want to acknowledge the way that D'Acampo's move from Italy to England may have rendered him sensitive to the stereotypes of Italians and Italy in England, how he might embody them, and the opportunities this embodiment may afford, in order to scrutinize his positioning as tactical 'authentic performance' and how far it enables him to capitalize on the exchange-value of authenticity.



Gino D'Acampo cookbooks in Terroni.

D'Acampo's lucrative television and publishing career (to date, ten cookery books, each one featuring prominently in the Amazon online sales list on release), together with his import company, 'Bontà Italia' (the largest importer of Italian products to the UK), and restaurant chains 'My Restaurant' and 'My Pasta Bar', situate him amongst a class of high-profile male Italian chefs currently enjoying great commercial success

in the UK; household names like Antonio Carluccio, Gennaro Contaldo, and Giorgio Locatelli.



A product of his own making? Bontà Italia, one of D'Acampo's business, listing 'Gino D'Acampo' amongst its products. Image Source: <<http://bontaitalia.co.uk>>

In contrast to Carluccio and Locatelli, however, who were raised in middle-class families in the North of Italy, and unlike Contaldo, whose Amalfi childhood is cited only in terms of its culinary importance (and who is arguably known as much for his mentoring role and friendship with British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver as he is in his own right), in the Italian press D'Acampo's position is invariably weighed up against his more modest Southern Italian origins:

Cuoco di professione, il giovane corallino, in Inghilterra, è una vera celebrità televisiva. Inoltre, il cuoco originario di Torre del Greco è diventato anche una star della Rete. Lui si definisce “solo un ragazzo come tanti altri che ama la cucina” [...]. Niente male per un ragazzo

diplomato all'Istituto alberghiero 'Luigi de Medici' di Napoli che confezionava panini in un fast food londinese.³⁴¹

(A cook by trade, the young corallino* is a real TV star in England. The chef from Torre del Greco has also become an online celebrity. He says he's 'just a guy who loves cooking, like hundreds of others' [...]. Not bad for a lad with only a college certificate who used to wrap up sandwiches in a London fast food chain.

Quella di Gennaro da Torre del Greco è la classica storia dell'italiano di umili origini che ottiene grande successo all'estero [...]. Senza un penny, racconta, 'ho bussato a diverse porte, facendo tre lavori contemporaneamente'. Dalle 5.30 del mattino fino alle 11.30 di sera.³⁴²

(The story of Gennaro from Torre del Greco is a classic one of the Italian of humble origins who finds his fortune abroad [...]. Without a penny, he recounts, 'I knocked on a lot of doors, working three jobs at the same time'. From 5.30 in the morning until 11.30 at night.)

In the British press, D'Acampo himself reinforces the financial incentive of his move to England:

I came from a very lower working-class family in Torre del Greco. I always remember my mum and dad arguing a lot and one main reason was lack of money. I realised very young that I always wanted to make money so I'd never have the same arguments like my mum and dad.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Mirella Carnile, 'Gino D'Acampo, Una Vera Celebrità', in *La Torre 1905*, 26 January 2013, online: <<http://www.latorre1905.it/curiosita/gino-dacampo-una-vera-celebrita/>> [accessed 10 March 2015].

* Translation note: 'corallino', literally 'little coral', is a nickname for residents of Torre del Greco and the neighbouring coastal towns in which one of the historical primary industries and sources of employment was the coral industry.

³⁴² Lidia Baratta, 'Gino D'Acampo, lo chef di Napoli diventato una star del Web', 12 April 2012, online: <<http://www.linkiesta.it/gino-d-acampo>> [accessed 10 March 2015].

³⁴³ D'Acampo cited in interview with Lorraine McBride, 'TV chef Gino D'Acampo: "My wife likes to leave a £100 tip"', *Telegraph* 7 December 2014, online: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/fameandfortune/11274971/TV-chef-Gino-D-Acampo-My-wife-likes-to-leave-a-100-tip.html>> [accessed 30 January 2017].

A marked Italian accent, a passion for food and eating, a foregrounding of family ties, attention to aesthetic appearance and a confident masculinity are consistently referenced as D'Acampo's defining, Italian characteristics in the British press; 'the accent, the dazzling white teeth, the hugs and kisses ("A flirt? Me? Never!"), the passion for pasta,'³⁴⁴ position him as a personification of the authentic. Because the visibility and indeed, audibility, of this Italian-ness is so easily identifiable, self-identity is explicitly linked with the idea of performance; 'Gino D'Acampo could have come straight out of Central Casting'.³⁴⁵ Thus Gino is understood to literally embody authenticity; he is 'a walking compendium of all things Italian'.³⁴⁶

I describe D'Acampo's Italian performance as 'audible' to underline how his accent is a fundamental element of this construct. The comedy he brings to ITV's *This Morning*, his first significant television role (2009-present),³⁴⁷ depends on the misunderstandings and mispronunciations of his Italian accent and especially by what sociolinguists call 'mergers', the inability of a speaker to produce two different vowel sounds. So when he ostensibly appears to be explaining to viewers that correct pronunciation of an Italian dish is 'lasagne' and not 'lasagna', co-hosts Holly Willoughby and Phil Schofield dissolve into laughter at his description of 'shits', rather than 'sheets' of lasagne.³⁴⁸ The humour provoked by the many similar instances as elements of D'Acampo's set on *This Morning* is structured as his definitive contribution to dialogue on the set of *Celebrity Juice*, an ITV2 late-peak television comedy panel game. In this series, D'Acampo's way of speaking is consistently mocked, questioned, or rendered in some way the principle feature of his intervention, even giving rise to a spoof documentary which suggests Gino D'Acampo is actually 'plain old John Champion', a 'Sheffield lad' who adopted the identity of 'Gino' and developed an absurd false accent after working in an Italian restaurant.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ Richard Barber, 'Gino D'Acampo: Why porridge was the making of me', *MAILONLINE*, 16 September 2011, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2037820/Gino-D'Acampo-Why-porridge-making-me.html#ixzz3GleWh5di>> [accessed 30 January 2017].

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ D'Acampo had a role on ITV's *Too Many Cooks* (2004) and *Soapstar Superchef* (2007), but his role on *This Morning* is usually quoted as his first television appearance.

³⁴⁸ *This Morning*, 5 October 2010.

³⁴⁹ *This Morning*, 25 September 2014, online: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6kVP9z9XNU>> [accessed 3 February 2017].

We can read this performance of authenticity as enabling, because it is as the quintessential Italian that D'Acampo is afforded authority to comment on (and on behalf of) Italy and Italians. 'Discover the secrets of *real* Italian food with Gino D'Acampo', runs the banner advertisement for an upcoming live tour;³⁵⁰ learn 'How to Cook Like a True Italian' proclaims the subtitle of his latest recipe collection.³⁵¹ D'Acampo's performance of authenticity can thus be read as part of a highly successful personal project of socio-economic self-realization. This is a tactical deployment of authenticity that has paid off, at least in financial terms. And yet the identification of D'Acampo as a guarantee of the 'real' and the 'true' brings us back to the problematic link between authenticity and primitivity that we analysed in the last chapter; because the authentic subject is constructed as primitivist, he is excluded from modernity,³⁵² and so the quest for the 'genuine' can ultimately inhibit the mobility of those perceived to *be* authentic.

This is something we might trace in the focalization of D'Acampo's body as an object of desire; 'Gino D'Acampo Cooks Naked Live on *This Morning*',³⁵³ and the lewd references and chauvinism D'Acampo is practically encouraged to exhibit towards female co-hosts on *Celebrity Juice*. In a typical *Celebrity Juice* sequence, host Keith Lemon reads out – in an exaggeratedly laboured, anglicized Italian – alleged comments made by D'Acampo regarding panel member Fearne Cotton, 'personal-credo-Fearne-vestiti-mel-come-uno drag queen!', before inviting D'Acampo to expand upon his sexual fantasies about the female Radio One DJ.³⁵⁴ The dynamic on set might be said to recall in some ways that of a child encouraged by an elder peer to misbehave: the chauvinistic performance of 'Gino' and the humour this generates, once again, afford D'Acampo group belonging – in this case by undermining another identity on the grounds of gender. Similarly, in a guest appearance on comedy panel game *Through the Keyhole* in which contestants must identify the celebrity owner of a home through visual clues, D'Acampo aggressively derides the sexual identity of

³⁵⁰ 'Gino's Italian Escape' Tour, 21 April – 11 May 2017, online: <<http://www.itv.com/ginositalianescape/live-tour>> [accessed 3 February 2017].

³⁵¹ *Gino's Hidden Italy: How to Cook Like a True Italian*.

³⁵² Jonas, p. 132; Skeggs, p. 106.

³⁵³ *This Morning*, 27 January 2011.

³⁵⁴ *Celebrity Juice*, ITV2, 10 November 2011, online: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IAS9tds1wU>> [accessed 3 February 2017].

the mystery homeowner: when shown feminist literature and aboriginal fertility statuettes as clues to the home of the academic Germaine Greer, his response, greeted by raucous laughter, is 'it must be a dyke'.³⁵⁵

To be sure, this paradigm of Gino as the 'primitive male' can be partially related to his role as a celebrity chef, a construct which contrives simultaneously to 'create class for the chef and to fundamentally undermine it'.³⁵⁶ Gwyn Hyman continues, 'through the mechanism of looking, the viewer/diner at once celebrates the chef as a genius, an artist, a genuinely famous guy, and undermines him, puts him in his place'.³⁵⁷ But D'Acampo's authority seems to ultimately be curtailed not because he gets his hands dirty in the kitchen, but because it depends as much upon an essentialized authentic ethnic identity – a primitive Italian male – as it does his culinary competence; it is his association with the performance of an ethno-cultural stereotype that 'puts him in his place'. 'If being "Italian" was an Olympic sport, then TV chef Gino D'Acampo would be in the running for a gold medal',³⁵⁸ writes one tabloid journalist, explicitly prizing the performance of a Italian identity over kitchen skills (and further alluding to the exaggerated construct of this identity by placing the adjective 'Italian' in inverted commas).

To this end, comparison of D'Acampo with British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver is revealing. Like D'Acampo, Oliver's popularity is related to an ebullient public persona; an Essex accent, a 'studied avoidance of a language specific to the art of cooking',³⁵⁹ and the childhood kitchen 'graft' he often foregrounds is distinct from that of many of his English rivals.³⁶⁰ But Oliver's international success, and perhaps most tellingly,

³⁵⁵ *Through the Keyhole*, ITV, 29 August 2015.

³⁵⁶ Gwyn Hyman, 'The Taste of Fame: Chef, Diners, Celebrity, Class', *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, 8.3 (2008), 43-52 (p.51).

³⁵⁷ Hyman, p.51.

³⁵⁸ Carl Greenwood, 'Gino D'Acampo: "Romance isn't for me – I buy my wife diamonds if I've been naughty"', *The Mirror*, 3 September 2014, online: <<http://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/ginodacampo-romance-isnt—4160972>> [accessed 3 November 2014].

³⁵⁹ Michael Cronin, 'Cooking the Books: Translation, Food and Migration', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 11.2-3 (2014), 337-54 (p. 340). As Cronin highlights, Oliver's cookbooks are interesting objects of study in their own right in terms of the 'domestication' of foreignness his language choice enacts.

³⁶⁰ In contrast to the London upbringings of celebrity chefs such as Nigella Lawson, Heston Blumenthal, Anthony Worrall Thompson, and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Oliver's parents were publicans, and Oliver often talks about practising cooking in the kitchen of 'The Cricketers' in Clavering (Essex) as a young boy.

his ability to sell Italian cuisine back to Italians – the Italian translation of *Jamie's Italy*, *Jamie Oliver: Il mio giro d'Italia* (Milan: TEA, 2012) is core stock in Italian national bookshop chain *La Feltrinelli* – bears testament to mobile authority that D'Acampo cannot claim, because Oliver's public status is not tied exclusively to the performance of an ethno-cultural identity in the same way that D'Acampo's is. Nor less does it rely on the implicit contestation of other identities, be they ethno-cultural, sexual, gendered or otherwise. Put simply, are we likely to ever trust a cookbook on 'Gino's China'? As an embodiment of Italian authenticity, 'Gino' is afforded authority to speak about Italy in England, but *only* about Italy in England. Thus, we can see how the tactic of authenticity works simultaneously to allow D'Acampo economic mobility and to fix him – in the role of a self-perpetuating cultural stereotype, that of a somewhat primitive Italian male.

Meredith Abarca, grounding her observations in the life experiences of working-class Mexican women, has written passionately about the issue of authenticity from an 'insider' culinary perspective. Describing her own conflicting feelings as a Mexican when listening to American TV personality Martha Stewart 'hijacking' (Arjun Appadurai's terminology, see footnote) Mexican *tamales*,³⁶¹ Abarca identifies a problematic 'romance' for ethnic food, in which 'authenticity becomes a charming double-edged sword'.³⁶² Emphasizing the creativity involved in preparing a recipe, and the addition of personal 'twists' ('*chiste*'), Abarca stresses that the privilege of a cultural insider to define and claim authenticity remains problematic, on the ground that such assertions of ownership can mute creativity: 'We must be careful that an insider's privilege to protect culture does not silence the desire for adding culinary *chistes* felt by younger generations'.³⁶³ Through his tenure of Italy via an authentic performance, we might say that the figure of D'Acampo emphasizes not the sharing or synthesis of culture, but privileges notions of essentialized difference: culture-as-property is, after all, a fixed, bounded entity, obscuring cultural hybridity in favour of ownership claims. Certainly, the recurrence of the possessive apostrophe marking D'Acampo's relationship with Italy is striking: viewers of *Gino's Hidden Italy*, *Gino's*

³⁶¹ Meredith E. Abarca, 'Authentic or Not, It's Original', *Food and Foodways* 12 (2004), 1-25 (p. 3), cf. Arjun Appadurai, 'Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology', in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. by Richard G. Fox (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1991) pp. 191-10 (p. 195).

³⁶² Abarca, p.12.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 5

Islands in the Sun, or *Gino's Italian Escape* are invited to discover 'his beloved Italy',³⁶⁴ and 'My Pasta Bar' and 'My Restaurant' are the names of the two dining chains D'Acampo owns and manages. As per one journalist's pithy jibe, 'if it's traditional, how come it's yours?'³⁶⁵

Abarca focuses on authenticity in terms of rights, querying who has the authority to speak for/on behalf of a community, but what we also see clearly with D'Acampo, I think more interestingly, is how the notion of the authentic can work also to stifle those who speak as 'authentic subjects'. The way in which D'Acampo attempts to package Italy and offer it up to consumers as 'his' effectively situates him as backwards, primitive, other, limiting his mobility beyond the virtual space of an Italian kitchen. Performing the cultural other to British audiences and enabling them to 'tour' *his* country, D'Acampo, with his authentic accent and chauvinistic humour, is an ideal poster boy of 'backwards Italy' whose redemptive 'taming' in the kitchen is seized as a chance for Britain to assert a distinctive social identity and pat itself on the back:

And he's unstinting in his praise of British society. 'When I came out of prison, there was a structure in place to help me get back on my feet. In Italy, you don't get a second chance. I've always found British people extremely civilised. You make a mistake, you pay for it – then you're allowed to start again with a clean slate'.³⁶⁶

Note how, in parading the gratitude Gino indicates regarding his experience of rehabilitation in England, the journalist marks Gino's implicit debt to 'British society'. D'Acampo is cited subsequently in the same article; 'I was embraced with open arms when I left prison. That is something I'll remember for as long as I live',³⁶⁷ and I want to stress the significance of D'Acampo's performance of cultural authenticity in relation to this seemingly benign discourse of gratitude. D'Acampo is the debtor here, a fundamentally weak position which brings us back to de Certeau's suggestion that

³⁶⁴ 'Gino's Italian Escape' webpage, online: <<http://www.itv.com/ginositalianescape>> [accessed 3 Feb 2017].

³⁶⁵ Jay Rayner, 'Gino D'Acampo – My Restaurant: restaurant review', *Guardian*, 9 October 2016, online: <<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/oct/09/gino-dacampo-my-restaurant-review-jay-rayner>> [accessed 3 Feb 2017].

³⁶⁶ Barber, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2037820/Gino-DAcampo-Why-porridge-making-me.html#ixzz3GleWh5di>> [accessed 30 January 2017].

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

the tactic is above all the art of the weak. We have seen how D'Acampo's embodiment of the authentic is enabling; it has an exchange-value, locating him as an authority on Italian culinary culture and bringing him financial reward. Here, we see how it is simultaneously restrictive, because he is afforded social belonging only through the performance of a crude stereotype which, crucially, relies in part on the undermining of other gender identities. Thus it is worth also considering D'Acampo's case as a provocative illustration of why it ought not to be too surprising that the fiercest investors in 'the guileful ruse' of cultures as bounded, hierarchical entities of exclusive belonging are perhaps also those made most sensitive to the weakness of their own position.

In sketching in D'Acampo's own life trajectory; his working-class origins, move to England, and subsequent commercial and popular success, I have sought to highlight how a problematic essentialist othering of ethnicity through the ideal of authenticity is inextricably tied up with very real personal gain in the form of the economic mobility afforded by this performance. What we have neglected to account for so far though, is the use-value of authenticity as it is presented by D'Acampo; the value that cannot be appropriated but 'can only be known when put to use'.³⁶⁸ We observed in the first half of the chapter how potentially conflicting and contradictory values – economic and social, exchange and use – are thoroughly and practically intermingled in the 'authentic experience' offered by SharedCity and I think with D'Acampo, we can consider cuisine itself can be seen as a site similarly charged with paradoxical values.

I was prompted to consider D'Acampo's cookbooks more closely when I noticed them displayed with other 'Gino' promotional material in Terroni. The quiet aura of a bygone Italy invoked by the décor of the café in London's historic Italian quarter seemed at odds with the brashness of D'Acampo's Italian performance. Was it perhaps an attempt to engage with a new crowd of consumers 'after authenticity', as Deborah puts it, in the design hub of contemporary Clerkenwell? The necessity of broadening my perspective on D'Acampo was confirmed after I asked a range of people - participants in my study, fellow participants on the SharedCity tour, friends - what they thought of 'Gino'. He may be a vile personality on gossip shows, was the general reasoning, but if you want to make your own Italian food, his cookbooks are the best;

³⁶⁸ Skeggs, p. 185.

user-friendly and affordable. Chasing this unexpected link with SharedCity and Terroni, I want now to focus on D'Acampo's portrayal of the value of cuisine itself, for there are interesting parallels in D'Acampo's insistence on the significance of cooking as an artisan activity which can strengthen social bonds with the sociality SharedCity seeks to foster. The texts in question also have significant personal meaning to D'Acampo, as he cites them as his 'proudest achievement':

Definitely becoming an author because I never thought in a million years somebody like me who never liked school would be able to write 10 cookery books. I write them myself and spend a lot of time [on them]. If you asked me 15 years ago whether I'd ever write a book, I'd have said: 'C'mon, never!'³⁶⁹

For the culinary enthusiast, Luce Giard suggests, the act of food preparation is a profound pleasure, a modest inventiveness of ephemeral consequence that 'circumscribes one's own space'.³⁷⁰ Similarly, Janet Theophano shows how cookbooks, whilst serving as a platform of entry into nostalgic recreations, have also offered the opportunity (for women) to gain economic independence and authority *and* transform the perception of domestic domain they inhabited.³⁷¹ Bearing in mind the very real economic success and authority D'Acampo's cooking and cookbooks have afforded him, it seems worth probing into the types of culinary images and practices he privileges.

The D'Acampo a reader may infer through his cuisine and specifically through his cookbooks, 'the implied author', stands in marked contradiction to the quintessential stereotype that we have just discussed.³⁷² Tellingly, whilst many users expressed amusement at D'Acampo's 'sassy attitude' of hyperbolic disgust when a guest chef on *This Morning* proposed a microwave mug recipe for spaghetti carbonara,³⁷³

³⁶⁹ D'Acampo cited in interview with McBride, online:

<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/fameandfortune/11274971/TV-chef-Gino-DAcampo-My-wife-likes-to-leave-a-100-tip.html>> [last accessed 3 Feb 2017].

³⁷⁰ Giard, 'Gesture Sequences', in *The Practice of Everyday Life. Volume 2: Living and Cooking*, ed. by de Certeau, Giard, and Mayol (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 199-213 (p. 213).

³⁷¹ Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

³⁷² Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 70-75.

³⁷³ *This Morning*, 21 November 2016.

culinary fans used the social media platform Twitter to express frustration at being unexpectedly greeted with an exaggerated performance of the Gino stereotype in this context. As one tweeter summed up: 'when he's on this morning he needs to leave celebrity juice Gino behind and bring back the cooking Gino'.³⁷⁴ Precisely because 'cooking Gino' gestures to a diverse audience, we need to counterbalance the circumscribed notion of authentic culture on which D'Acampo's essentialized performance relies with recognition of the more dynamic and inclusive understanding promoted by his style of cooking and the food itself.

Whilst the 'Gino' construct works in many ways to reify a misleading conception of culture as a bounded entity of exclusive belonging and property, I want to argue that the food he presents can be said to invite consumers to engage creatively with hybrid understandings of culture and the possibility of social interaction. The television series *Gino's Italian Escape*, in which D'Acampo travels to various locations in Italy exploring the origins and 'secrets' of regional recipes before preparing a local dish, is exemplary of the intertwining of these apparently conflicting interpretations.

The exoticism implicit in the title of the programme is enhanced with the sensory appeal of close-ups of colourful foods, wide pans of golden fields, and a backing soundtrack of opera music. Stereotypical associations are acknowledged at the start of each programme, with the opening credits informing the viewer that 'for Italians, the most important thing in life is food'.³⁷⁵ We observe D'Acampo flanking a chef as he kneads pasta dough, explaining, 'he said the most important thing is love and passion to put in there. I'm with him'. This sequence introduces a shift in the 'Latin lover' archetype evoked, however, in that D'Acampo is also our interpreter (explicitly positioning himself as such: '*He said*') and consequently situated in a role of authority: he is the viewer's guide on the gastronomic tour of Italy, the voice which selects the object of our gaze and renders it intelligible. Interactions portrayed within the programme between D'Acampo and the range of professionals involved in the hospitality and food industries enhance the complexity of this position and underline its fluid duality, because D'Acampo alternates between a culinary student: 'It would

³⁷⁴ Tweet from @gaz4944hotmal GazzaDoyle, '@thismorning @ginofantastico when hes on this morning he needs to leave celebrity juice gino behind and bring back the cooking gino' 12.08pm, 21 November 2016.

³⁷⁵ *Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste of the Sun*, ITV, 10 October 2014.

be impossible for me to come to Bologna and not to learn how to make the Bologna shape of pasta which is tortellini and tortelloni', and teacher: the occasional grammatical and syntactical errors of a non-native English speaker which, as we have seen, are habitually a source of undermining comedy and ridicule, in this context allude to his belonging to a group in which the viewer would be an implicit outsider, and it is only with D'Acampo's translations, explanations and cultural insights that the viewer is able to interpret the significance of images, gestures and instructions. This is a dynamic which reinforces D'Acampo's relative position of power.

Why is D'Acampo's power in this context relevant? My point is not simply that in some programmes, co-presenters laugh at D'Acampo, and in other programmes, he is both knowledgeable and a willing learner. What is interesting about the teacher/student construct is how it works to undermine the distinction between cultural 'insider' and 'outsider': simultaneously inhabiting the positions of learner and teacher, D'Acampo's liminality can be to productively destabilize the very stereotype he performs. Introducing *Gino's Italian Escape: Hidden Italy*, he challenges the authority associated with his embodiment of an authentic Italian identity by emphasizing his *lack* of knowledge about Italy. Talking about his first visit to Lake Como as part of the programme, he explains how as a Southern Italian having grown up by the sea, he had to re-think his own prejudices against the North:

I was shocked because it was such a beautiful place [...]. The pond didn't look like a pond. It looked like the sea. The water was clean and clear, all the colourful houses on the shore, the mountains all around, the bars... It's incredible. And you can do anything you would do in the sea except taste the salt. People fish, water-ski, surf if there is wind, there are beaches, boats everywhere. I can see why those American stars are all going to Lago di Como now.³⁷⁶

From this perspective, in contrast to the distinction between flat national stereotypes of 'Italian' and 'British' that circulate around D'Acampo's performance of authenticity,

³⁷⁶ D'Acampo interviewed by Claire Web, 'Gino D'Acampo on the weirdness of northern Italy and borrowing George Clooney's speedboat', *Radio Times*, online: <<http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2016-10-24/gino-dacampo-on-the-weirdness-of-northern-italy-and-borrowing-george-clooneys-speedboat>> [accessed 3 February 2017].

what is privileged is the diversity *within* cultures, and the surprising affiliations between and beyond them:

It's like another country. The landscape is completely different. The food is completely different. The dialect is completely different. I had no idea what some of them were talking about, even when they were speaking Italian. It was like talking with someone from Liverpool or Newcastle!³⁷⁷

Significantly, this perspective is not confined to the oft-invoked regional differences between Northern and Southern Italy, but reflected back onto D'Acampo's Southern origins. Given that the 'cousin' cities of Palermo and Naples, the provincial capital of D'Acampo's hometown, are often synonymously considered as representative of Southern Italian culture, it is noteworthy that the chef does not fall back on the authority he could, in this case, presume as a *meridionale*, but rather, in his cookbook, *Gino's Islands in the Sun*, writes of his eager anticipation of the opportunity filming offered to travel to Sicily: 'I'd never visited the island so it was an entirely new adventure for me and I was really excited'.³⁷⁸ The exploration of cultural hybridity is celebrated, and across the range of his cookbooks and cookery programmes, the enthusiastic narratives which frame recipes can be seen to deconstruct the notion of authenticity itself:

I didn't know that northern Italian people do strudel. I thought it was an Austrian thing. I was like: 'Guys, I need to do something Italian. English people rely on me to show them Italian food, not strudel!' They said, 'Gino, strudel has been in our culture for centuries.' So they showed me how to make this beautiful strudel with the apples that they have, amaretto liqueur and raisins.³⁷⁹

I know chorizo is Spanish but it is so good I have stolen some for this recipe! There are two different types: 'eating' chorizo, which is like a

³⁷⁷ D'Acampo interviewed by Claire Web, 'Gino D'Acampo on the weirdness of northern Italy and borrowing George Clooney's speedboat', *Radio Times*, online: <<http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2016-10-24/gino-dacampo-on-the-weirdness-of-northern-italy-and-borrowing-george-clooneys-speedboat>> [accessed 3 February 2017].

³⁷⁸ *Gino's Islands in the Sun* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), p.9.

³⁷⁹ D'Acampo interviewed by Web, <<http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2016-10-24/gino-dacampo-on-the-weirdness-of-northern-italy-and-borrowing-george-clooneys-speedboat>>.

salami that can be eaten raw, and ‘cooking’ chorizo which is like any other sausage but it’s full of spices and paprika.³⁸⁰

These extracts indicate how D’Acampo’s recipes revel in the spontaneous and hybrid nature of culinary culture as a lived experience, a line of thought that has been persuasively theoretically elaborated by Heldke in her call for alternative interpretations of authenticity.³⁸¹ Heldke draws on John Dewey’s theory of aesthetics, which distinguishes between art as a product (e.g. a painting), and a ‘work of art’, which is what the product does in and with social experience.³⁸² Applying this distinction to the work of cuisine, Heldke contrasts the notion of authenticity as an inherent stand-alone quality of a given dish – a notion she connects to ‘the view of selves as independent, hermetically sealed packages’ – with an experiential conception of cuisine, situating eating authentic ethnic food as a conversation in which each party contributes.³⁸³ She explains

When authenticity is understood to be a quality of exchange demands for authenticity end up being of a rather different sort. For instance, rather than identify dishes prepared ‘just the way’ they would be prepared ‘in their native context’ as representing ‘the gold standard’ of authenticity, we might valorize the gesture of a cook who recognises the limited familiarity of her (non-native) diners, and cooks ‘to’ them in a way that enables an interaction to develop.³⁸⁴

The consistent stress on practicability within D’Acampo’s cookbooks; a recurring emphasis on improvisation, simplicity, and *sharing food* as the pleasurable elements of cooking, offers compelling evidence for the validity of this application of the term authentic. Heldke’s reasoning also provides a model through which the aspiration to experience authentic ethnic cuisine, rather than representing a form of cultural appropriation tied up with the need to distinguish the self socially (i.e. knowing the

³⁸⁰ Gino D’Acampo, *Pronto! Let’s Cook Italian in 20 Minutes* (London: Kyle Cathie, 2014) p. 82.

³⁸¹ Lisa Heldke, ‘But Is It Authentic? Culinary Travel and the Search for the “Genuine Article”’, in *The Taste Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), pp. 385-94 (pp. 389-90).

³⁸² Heldke, pp. 388-89; cf. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, vol.10 of *John Dewey: The Later Works 1925-1953* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987).

³⁸³ Heldke, p. 389.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-90.

'right' pairings of foods and wines, or how to eat a certain dish), can be read as a cultural transaction, a desire for meaningful exchange. In such circumstances, as Jonas points out, the accrual of cultural capital is a consequence rather than an objective.³⁸⁵ This emphasis on the work of cuisine as a *social* activity is reinforced in web-based relations through the Twitter portal. Via the @Ginofantastico handle, Gino's followers share images and responses to his recipes and dining venues as part of an online community. The undeniable utility of such interaction as (free, instant and virtually unlimited) promotional activity should not be seen as detracting from its capacity to create a sense of social cohesion. This is a possibility we can interpret both through the posts shared; the communication effected via @Ginofantastico is actively bi-directional, with images and comments re-tweeted and responded to directly on a daily basis (up until recently by Gino himself, now the account seems to be professionally managed), and via the implicit sociality of food preparation.

Even for those cooking and dining alone, @Ginofantastico renders visible a community bound by a commonality of skills, values and pleasures. In *Pronto! Let's Cook Italian in 20 Minutes*, D'Acampo situates his online fans as embarked on a shared project; dedicated to 'all my Twitter and Facebook followers for all your support over the years', the book is presented as a direct response to the requests and suggestions of this lively community.³⁸⁶ The understanding of cuisine as a form of social interaction is reinforced within the cookbooks themselves:

The most important thing about this course [antipasto] is the care and time taken to plate the food; it reminds you and your guests that mealtimes are for relaxing, pleasure and indulgence, as well as opportunities to do a simple 'how was your day?'. We often forget to do this in our busy lives, and yet it is so important to Italian families, and, I would argue, any family. So if nothing else, prepare a few of these dishes for your family, tuck in and enjoy being together with good food.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁵ Jonas, pp.117-37.

³⁸⁶ *Pronto! Let's Cook Italian in 20 Minutes*, acknowledgements and copyright page.

³⁸⁷ *Gino's Italian Escape: A Taste of the Sun* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014), p.14.

Perhaps most revealing is the fact that one of the few instances that D'Acampo writes explicitly of authenticity is to contrast an experience in a Sardinian farmstay with many tourist restaurants. After recommending the 'authentic experience' of a homely Sardinian agriturismo 'and I do mean homely, as they can literally be in somebody's home (I well remember, on one occasion, the shock of finding toothbrushes by the sink!)', D'Acampo offers a list of eight 'Sardinian Lessons for Life', which stress a conviviality achieved through quotidian gestures of friendship; 'Laugh with friends – visit any village in Sardinia and I guarantee you will see people sitting in their doorsteps chatting and enjoying life', appreciation of the natural environment; 'Whatever the weather, go out and enjoy it whenever you can – Fresh air is vital for health and wellbeing', and intergenerational contact; 'Celebrate your elders – Grandparents not only provide love, childcare and financial help, but carry a wealth of wisdom'.³⁸⁸

D'Acampo's approach to cooking and Italian food is actually therefore one which celebrates the hybridity of cuisine and places it very firmly in a social context. Whilst an overly redemptive reading of the media figure of 'Gino' would be inaccurate, it seems significant that it is precisely *through* the highly problematic, tactical embodiment of a stereotyped authenticity that this understanding of the hybridity of cuisine and its role as social encounter is accessed. I am not saying that all engagements with Gino lead ultimately to the more interactive and hybrid understanding of encounter I trace in his cuisine - quite the opposite, if we judge the disparaging attitude of 'cooking Gino' fans towards 'Celebrity Juice Gino' articulated on social media. What is interesting to me is that, in a similar fashion we have seen SharedCity, it is not only that these two extreme self-presentations; one representing essentialized, exoticized, authentic, primitive Italian 'other'; the other indicating with a more open-ended desire to create meaningful social interaction and appreciate the inherent hybridity of (culinary) culture co-exist, but that the latter appears to be paradoxically co-dependent on the former. Gino provides a striking example of how an exoticized vision of the authentic does not just sit alongside reflexive engagement; here, the two are intricately inter-related.

³⁸⁸ *Gino's Islands in the Sun* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), pp. 14-15.

iii. Conclusions: authenticity as encounter

Through two very disparate examples of authenticity proffered for consumption, an 'authentic tour of London's Little Italy' by walking tour company SharedCity, and the performance of authenticity of Italian TV personality and celebrity chef Gennaro 'Gino' D'Acampo, this chapter has demonstrated how seemingly contradictory investments in the ideal of authenticity are intertwined in quotidian practice. D'Acampo's commercial success indicates how claims to authenticity can be both enabling and limiting; the commodification of an Italian identity affords him mobility in economic terms, but limits his movement across other sites, reducing him to an exaggerated stereotype of Italian otherness. SharedCity provided an example of the way that the desirability of otherness can be converted in a more meaningful form of engagement, with the potential to undermine the essentialist perspective on which it is predicated. Similarly, a focus on the hybridity and creativity in the work of cuisine proposed by D'Acampo was shown to be emblematic of the way in which the possibility of affective social encounter may be concealed within the appeal of otherness.

In both these examples, I have interpreted a common emphasis on a productive sociality; on how when placed in the hands of 'real people', the abstract notion of the authentic can be queried and re-moulded in unexpected and seemingly contradictory ways. This brings me back to Abarca's discussion of authenticity in 'Authentic or Not, It's Original', and I would like to conclude by considering her call for an alternative way of conceptualizing the production of ethnic cuisine. When Abarca proposes that culinary production is best described as 'original', a word which she suggests can undermine the power relations implicit in claims to authenticity,³⁸⁹ she seems at first glance to be on shaky ground, reinforcing the notion of a fixed, clear-cut origin and thus invoking a misleading stability - scholars of translation will perhaps be the first to point out that any 'original' will vary radically in meaning and effect.³⁹⁰ But, viewed in light of the findings of this chapter, Abarca's distinction may be a productive one. Rather than pursuing fixed, unambiguous origins, it is an interpretation which equates originality with artisan creativity, valuing above all the inventive craftsmanship of cuisine. In this sense, Abarca's arguments are in line with Walter

³⁸⁹ Abarca, p.20.

³⁹⁰ Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 5; see also Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p.4.

Benjamin's understanding of the concept of authenticity in relation to art, and suggestion that the 'aura' of a work of art depends on its presence in a specific time and place and thus is absent from mechanical reproductions.³⁹¹ Developing Benjamin's arguments in her study of material culture, Judy Attfield has similarly stressed that 'originality is one of the most highly valued attributes in a world where technology enables the effortless production of an infinite number of clones to be reproduced from the prototype',³⁹² connecting qualms about technological manufacture to profound social anxieties about the dehumanization of the production of culture. As with Heldke's understanding of authenticity as a quality of social exchange, what becomes evident through these interpretations is the importance of a *social* meaning that becomes absent, obscured or irrelevant when culture is transplanted into a new context.

In the next chapter, we will pursue the theme of sociality by scrutinizing language itself as a form of encounter, and by investigating how its social nature can be capitalized upon within the language learning process.

³⁹¹ Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1968), pp. 214-18.

³⁹² Attfield, p.78.



'Smile' / 'Keep calm and eat hamburger': Fud Bottega Sicula in Palermo.

V. Words

Often it starts with words. Indonesian, for example, has a special word, gurih, for the taste of rice ('deliciously pungent', according to one dictionary). If you come from England, you are then startled to realise that the taste of rice can't be described with a designated English word. On the other hand, Indonesian has no word like the English 'sepia' for the beautiful colour of old photographs. The same is true of concepts. Javanese has a word, longan, for the empty space under a chair or bed, which English does not.

Benedict Anderson, *A Life Beyond Boundaries*.³⁹³

*You are the one for me, for me, for me, formidable
But how can you
See me, see me, see me, si minable
Je ferais mieux d'aller choisir mon vocabulaire
Pour te plaire
Dans la langue de Molière.*

Charles Aznavour and Jacques Plante, 'For Me Formidable'.³⁹⁴

'Terroni', the plural of 'terrone' is a pejorative term for Southern Italians that carries with it Italy's history of internal migration. First used to describe the landlords of Southern Italy following unification ('terra' meaning 'land' or 'earth'), in the South-to-North migration of the 1950s and 1960s it acquired a racial subtext: the Italian South was constructed as a homogenous and static entity, and the 'terrone' were constructed as the ultimate 'other' – economically poor, culturally deprived, and generally inferior.³⁹⁵ When Mario, who is from Sicily, first saw Terroni he mistook the shop's name as an ironic invocation of this term which is still used to refer to Southern Italians.³⁹⁶ Val, on the other hand, knew that the shop had been established by a

³⁹³ Anderson, p. 132.

³⁹⁴ Charles Aznavour and Jacques Plante, 'For Me Formidable', 1963.

³⁹⁵ Enrica Capussotti, 'Nordisti contro Sudisti: Internal Migration and Racism in Turin, Italy: 1950s and 1960s', *Italian Culture*, 23.2 (2010), 121-38 (p. 121).

³⁹⁶ Capussotti, p. 123.

certain Terroni family (who actually came from the North of Italy - the surname is apparently not unusual in a town in the northern-most tip of the province of Massa Carrara).³⁹⁷ Listening to Mario explain to Val why the name had made him smile made very evident to me how language itself acts as site of quotidian cultural encounter. The misunderstanding of just one word offered a window into much wider political themes, historical processes and cultural identifications of both Italy and England, and my subsequent attempts to translate the term with different groups and posit English-language equivalents led into lively discussions of the industrial history of Northern England, Geoffrey Howe's incendiary proposal of the 'managed decline' of Liverpool, and the London bias in English news reporting. Similarly, at the 'Writing Across Languages and Borders' workshops, the invitation to select favourite words inspired the exchange of intimate memories and associations as well as regional and national identifications born out of movement between languages. 'I like the sound' one participant said of 'abbraccio, the Italian word for 'hug', 'but it also goes against my slightly colder English side'; another wrote how she didn't like the word 'plazzy'; 'I used to be called a "plazzy Scouser" when I was a kid because I grew up just outside of Liverpool, so I wasn't a "real" Scouser but a "plastic" (or "plazzy") one', whilst the participant who chose 'gorgeous' explained 'never have found a word in any other language which describes gorgeous in such gorgeousness'.³⁹⁸ These discussions have stayed with me as, I think, excellent examples of the type of experience that Benedict Anderson imagines when he describes how ethnographers cross a 'language wall' to find themselves recognizing the strangeness of places and practices they previously took for granted or uncritically considered 'home'.³⁹⁹ Hence Anderson highlights the value of struggling with language learning, because it is through the slow process of coming to terms with a 'foreign' tongue that the ethnographer is granted special powers of observation; 'you gradually get to notice more, and yet you are still an outsider', he argues, 'the point being that good comparisons often come from the experience of strangeness'.

³⁹⁷ For more information on the Terroni family, see Besagni, p. 102.

³⁹⁸ 'Writing Across Languages and Cultures', organized by Naomi Wells and Jennifer Burns with Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, Sandwell Arts Café, West Bromwich, 12th-20th May 2015, and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 3rd February-22nd June 2016
<https://writingacrossblog.wordpress.com/2016/02/09/workshop-1-words-and-voices-wednesday-3rd-february/> [accessed 21 June 2017].

³⁹⁹ Anderson, pp. 131-32.

In the previous chapter I used the example of SharedCity to indicate how the appeal of the other and the exotic in the form of ‘authentic Italy’ can also be related to more reflective, and more positive, moments of intercultural contact rather than being tied up exclusively in processes of essentialism. In this final chapter, I want to bring these considerations back ‘home’ to Modern Languages by focusing on the particular form of critical reflection that the movement between languages and encounter with the ‘foreignness’ of language can enable.

This chapter, even more so than the previous ones, deals with apparently extremely heterogeneous materials. It reports on the experience of a bar, and the experience of a language learning classroom. What both environments offer, as we will see, is an indication of how movement between languages is a means of encouraging a questioning attention to the world we inhabit and the subjective nature of our own perspective. It brings the reflexivity and attention to the everyday of ethnography back home to language and language learning through an attention to words.

In the first half of the chapter, I consider ‘Fud: Bottega Sicula’, an informal bar and restaurant in Palermo (Sicily), as an example of a space in which language is creatively manipulated to resist and contest a dominant symbolic system. We will examine how speaking English with an accent, a practice inscribed with negative value, is re-worked to create an inclusive sense of community and local worth. I will use the context of Fud to draw out parallels between Beverley Skeggs’s reading of classed culture in terms of use-value and individual meaning with current theorization of multilingual practice, clarifying the relevance of the concept of translanguaging. I will focus on Li Wei’s identification of ‘fun with words’ in what he calls ‘translanguaging space’.⁴⁰⁰ The aim here is twofold: to call for further investigation of the creative and surprising ways in which language works on an everyday level to re-inscribe value, and to demonstrate the broader significance of ‘fun with words’ as a critical encounter.

The second half of the chapter builds on these findings by practically exploring how language learning is a form of critical inquiry in its own right. It investigates how the creativity that Fud exemplifies can be capitalized upon in the language classroom.

⁴⁰⁰ Li Wei, ‘Moment Analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (2010), 1222-35.

This section of the thesis is conceived as a germinal response to concern expressed in feedback at TML events that the project seems vague with regards to what a transnational approach to language teaching would be and how such an approach could be implemented in Higher Education language teaching in the UK. It is also, in part, an attempt to experiment in a grounded way with Alastair Pennycook's assertion that a critically-engaged approach to language must 'operate with a tension between the need for firm enough ground to engage in political action while almost simultaneously questioning the grounds on which such thought and action are located'.⁴⁰¹ Here, I am thinking of what David Gramling has coined as the 'invention of monolingualism'; the processes through which the heterogeneity of different ways of speaking became 'tempered' in modernity – fine-tuned until they become understood as bounded categories, 'French', 'Arabic', 'Italian', 'English'.⁴⁰² I commented in my introduction on my enthusiasm at the creativity of the language of Italians in Bedford, who Forte reports as using words like 'sciabola' for 'shovel' (instead of 'badile'), or 'fare il sacco' for 'give the sack' (rather than 'licenziare'). As I indicated at the time, the irony that Forte described this translanguaging as 'un vocabulario fusion' struck me as an unwitting hint to the sheer porosity of the social constructs we call languages. This part of the thesis is chance to think through the role that the creativity and heterogeneity of everyday language, its *constructed* nature, can play in the language learning process.

Reporting on a student project, 'Collaborative Translation: A Model for Inclusion' in which, together with Gioia Panzarella, I coordinated the 'Language Learning' element of the investigation, I explore in practical terms what a critical approach to language teaching might look like. Via reference to participant feedback, observation notes, lesson plans and material, and the rationale of the project, I reflect on the use of a specific model of collaborative translation at different levels of language teaching with a view to develop language learning as a critical process. Given the early stages of this project, more so than anywhere in the thesis, these considerations are less conclusive assertions, more an invitation to (re)consider in a very concrete way just what we do, or what we want to do and ought to do, when we learn and teach languages.

⁴⁰¹ Pennycook, p. 128.

⁴⁰² David Gramling, *The Invention of Monolingualism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

i. ‘Sono le parole inglesi, ma come le utilizziamo noi’ (‘they’re English words, but how we use them’): Fud and the use-value of language

Skeggs explains that because use-values can only be known when they are put to use, they force us to focus on the actual uses of culture, relations and practice; we can look past dominant symbolic understandings that are premised on exchange, and explore instead how something has different values in different contexts.⁴⁰³ Here I want to apply Skeggs’ perspective to language and consider its use-value. Construing language in terms of use-value means setting aside linguistic proficiency as cultural capital, as a commodity,⁴⁰⁴ an *exchangeable* asset – a skill to be referenced on a C.V. – and to seek out instead forms of linguistic practices that appear unexchangeable, without symbolic capital: everyday ways of using and making language that rework dominant meanings to create new ones. It is from this perspective that I examine Sicilian bar and restaurant ‘Fud: Bottega Sicula’ (from now on referred to as ‘Fud’). I analyse Fud’s sustained use of linguistic games, suggesting that this space subverts a dominant symbolic system, in which English is coded positively and speaking in local dialect and a lack of spoken English or speaking English with an accent are both coded negatively, to produce local value. Fud is thus presented as an example of the complex and critically stimulating meanings present in the quotidian and informal spaces that surround us and that are worthy of Modern Languages’ attention.

Founded by Sicilian restaurateur and foodblogger Andrea Graziano in Catania in 2012 (Via Santa Filomena, the same street in which Graziano began his career in hospitality with his first restaurant over ten years ago), Fud expanded recently in 2015 with a second branch in the regional capital, Palermo. I visited the Palermo branch of Fud in November 2015 after being intrigued by an eager recommendation from Rossana, my host in the city. As the owner and manager of a small, family-run bed-and-breakfast in Palermo, Rossana made the usual polite inquiries about my stay. When I said I had come from London, she said that she had never been and very much hoped to one day, and that she relished the opportunity to practice speaking English with her guests, but was often embarrassed by her Italian

⁴⁰³ Skeggs, p. 186.

⁴⁰⁴ Phipps and Gonzalez, pp. 2-3.

pronunciation. The conversation broadened into the shared experience of language difficulties and the comic moments that they can provoke and she enthusiastically suggested I find time to visit Fud during my time in the city, because ‘sono le parole inglesi, ma come le utilizziamo noi’ (‘they’re English words, but how we use them’).

Presented as ‘qualcosa di più semplice, alla portata di tutti’ (‘something more simple, open to everyone’),⁴⁰⁵ the defining feature of Fud is its use of English words which are transcribed phonetically according to Italian pronunciation. The menu’s ‘carne di cavallo marinata e speziata’ (‘marinated and spiced horse meat’) thus becomes ‘Ors Che Bab’ (‘Horse Kebab’); ‘Spais Potetos’ (‘Spice Potatoes’) are ‘spicchi di patate aromitizzate con paprika dolce’ (‘potato wedges flavoured with paprika’); signature dishes such as ‘Cauntri’, ‘Uoscinton’, and ‘Maiemi’ may or may not be recognised by an English native speaker as ‘Country’, ‘Washington’, and ‘Miami’. This inventive form of intra-lingual translation (from standard English to a phonetic transcription of Italian-inflected English) extends across the restaurant space, creatively alluding to identified difficulties for Italian speakers of English, such as the use of plural ‘s’, and possessive pronoun: ‘De Fud Uain’ and ‘De Fud Coctel’ (‘Fud’s Wine’ and ‘Fud’s Cocktails’). Fud consequently lends a particular linguistic angle to the well-established trope of cooking as a metonym for culture.⁴⁰⁶ In this case, it is the representation of foodstuff which can be seen most obviously to simultaneously symbolise and contest ideas of Italian and Sicilian identity.

To understand the significance of Fud’s elaborate linguistic pranks, we need to first acknowledge that one of the most problematic features of the English language is its lack of correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. Gerard Nolst Trenité demonstrates this practically in his introduction to a 146-line ode to these difficulties, ‘The Chaos’:

Dearest creature in creation,
Study English pronunciation.
I will teach you in my verse
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.

⁴⁰⁵ ‘Fud: Bottega Sicula’, online: <<http://www.cibodistrada.it/locali/fud-bottega-sicula>> [accessed 11th November 2011].

⁴⁰⁶ Goldman, p. 169.

I will keep you, Susy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy.
Tear in eye, your dress will tear.
So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.⁴⁰⁷

For Italians familiar with the phonetic ease of a language which is pronounced precisely as it is written, the very concept of having to explain how a word is written is, literally, a foreign one: 'lo spelling'. In common with many people who acquire English as an additional language, Italian students of English often find the lack of resemblance between spoken and written English a source of frustration and embarrassment. It is also important to recognize that such a sense of awkwardness is particularly prevalent in Italy, given that knowledge of English can be argued to correspond to symbolic capital on a domestic level in perhaps a more pervasive way than it does in other European countries: contemporary endemic 'anglomania' and 'anglophilia' are not merely the result of more recent transnational flows, but the pervasive product of entrenched positive cultural stereotypes of England dating back several centuries, standing in stark contrast to a pragmatic assessment of English purely in terms of communicative value and a sense of anglophobia identifiable amongst the governing elite of other European nations, such as France.⁴⁰⁸ Italy's former prime minister, Matteo Renzi, was frequently derided for his poor English and marked Italian accent in harsh satires, a criticism to which leaders from other EU countries are not so commonly subjected on their home turf. In Italy, an inability to *speak* English, in particular, is – unfairly and inaccurately – widely declaimed as a sign of broader cultural ignorance.

At the same time, whilst scholarly approaches have dissociated Gramsci's development of the notion of the subaltern from the Southern Question,⁴⁰⁹ Italian

⁴⁰⁷ Gerard Nolst Trenité, 'The Chaos', *Drop Your Foreign Accent: Engelsche Uitspraakoeeningen* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1929).

⁴⁰⁸ Robert J. Blackwood, and Stefania Tufi, *The Linguistic Landscape of the Mediterranean: French and Italian Coastal Cities* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 179-83.

⁴⁰⁹ See Green, pp 18-19, and comparison Green makes with Spivak's comments in interview: 'Now, the word "subaltern" as one knows is the description of a military thing. One knows that Gramsci used it because Gramsci was obliged to censor himself in prison. One also knows that the word changed in its use when Gramsci presciently began to be able to see what we today call north-south problems, sitting in prison in Italy, because he was talking on southern Italy, just class-formation questions were not going to solve anything. And so then the word "subaltern" became packed with meaning'. Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in

popular imagination has not. We can say that there exists within Southern Italy a profound consciousness of being presented as economically, socially and culturally backwards in comparison with the more urban North. We observed Silvestro voice the effects of this construct passionately in Chapter III: 'lo amo il sud, vengo del sud, e credo che il sud è sempre stato denigrato rispetto al nord. Per me è tutto uguale non c'è differenza; nord, sud. Però in Italia si sente questo fatto'. We can also track a different type of investment in this internal stereotype in the recent popularity of films like *Benvenuti al Sud* (2010), *Il principe abusivo* (2013), and *Si accettano miracoli* (2015) in Italy. These films claim value through the very traits that are coded as negative in the dominant symbolic system – physicality, lack of respect for state structures, and general excess or 'esagerazione', for example, are re-claimed as spontaneity, human compassion, and generosity – but by doing so they also confirm and perpetuate the strength of the paradigm of Southern otherness.

It is in this context I want to reflect upon Fud's re-working of the English language according to the phonetic conventions of Italian pronunciation, which I think we can productively read as the re-appropriation of a value hierarchy. From the menu to the directions guiding diners to the toilet, this space playfully manipulates the dominant value system to create a sense of inclusivity and local worth. By exhibiting pronunciation traits which are usually mocked as linguistic shortcomings, such as pronunciation of the aspirated h sound of 'hotel', Fud contends the negative inscription of Italian-accented English and instead celebrates language as dynamic, organic, and social. Indeed, it is the sociality of this space, as well as the quality of the food, that is highlighted by users in many Italian reviews shared via the online forum 'TripAdvisor'.

Con un gruppo di amici oggi vi abbiamo pranzato nella sala interna. Geniale l'idea del tavolo sociale e della comunicazione con la scelta di termini scritti per come si pronunciano. Accogliente il locale, ottimo il cibo tutto siciliano e artigianale (nulla di commerciale). Prezzi abbastanza

South Africa. Interview conducted by L. de Kock and published in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 23.3 (1992), 29-47.

accessibili. Ottimi anche i dessert! Davvero consigliato. Bravi! (Lorena Anna P., Italy).⁴¹⁰

(We ate here with a group of friends today in the inside dining room. Brilliant idea of a social table and communicating with terms written how they are pronounced. Welcoming environment, excellent food – all Sicilian and artisan produce (nothing commercial). Reasonably priced. Delicious desserts too! Highly recommended. Well done!)

The emphasis on sociality and communication from Lorena (who we can presume, based on her other contributions, is a local user) is reflected in comments from non-Italian visitors. Whilst it is likely that the inventive use of language will pass unnoticed by some native English speakers without prior knowledge of Italian language, or familiarity with Italian-inflected English, and whilst even those who do recognize the language at play will certainly not experience it in the same way locals do, the observations shared by travellers from a wide variety of linguistic backgrounds mark Fud as a meeting point for different perspectives and different systems of value. One of the most recent American reviewers at the time of writing commented, ‘I asked about the name and an employee explained “FUD” represented how the English word “food” might be pronounced in Italian’,⁴¹¹ indicating how Fud operates as an inclusive and constructive space of cultural encounter on a mundane level. Customers discuss the interplay between images and text as well as English and Italian, and ask waiting staff to explain linguistic pranks. By encouraging curiosity and inviting exchange in this way, the enactment and display of linguistic and culinary synthesis can be seen to promote a practical and respectful engagement with the ‘foreign’, the ‘cultural other’. Consider these reviews:

The owners of this place in St. Filomena street not only apply wittily onomatopoeia in the menu (and the name of the place as well) and make

⁴¹⁰ ‘Trip Advisor Review’, online:<https://www.tripadvisor.it/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d3727084-r434647717-FUD_Bottega_Sicula-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html#REVIEWS> [accessed 11th November 2016].

⁴¹¹ ‘Trip Advisor Review’, online:<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d3727084-r383246710-FUD_Bottega_Sicula-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html#REVIEWS> [accessed 11th November 2016].

fun of Italian inability to pronounce 'h', for example AM burger, ER burger, but also make delicious burgers. (SasaZag, from Ljubljana, Slovenia).⁴¹²

The menu is quirkily written in English, but using Italian phonetics so that Italians can read it quite easily. Food was excellent, whether you wanted a traditional Italian style meal or the 'gourmet burger' option, which is becoming increasingly common in cities. This menu, and the quality of the food, largely contributes to the broad appeal of FUD and explains the queues and the lively atmosphere. Would certainly revisit and recommend to others. (Colin M., Hereford, UK).⁴¹³

This place has the best burgers. It has to be eaten to experience the wide variety of tastes that are embedded in it. An awesome way to experience Italian way of speaking as their name and menu both are written in the way Italians speak English. (Vikram M., Bangalore, Karnataka, India).⁴¹⁴

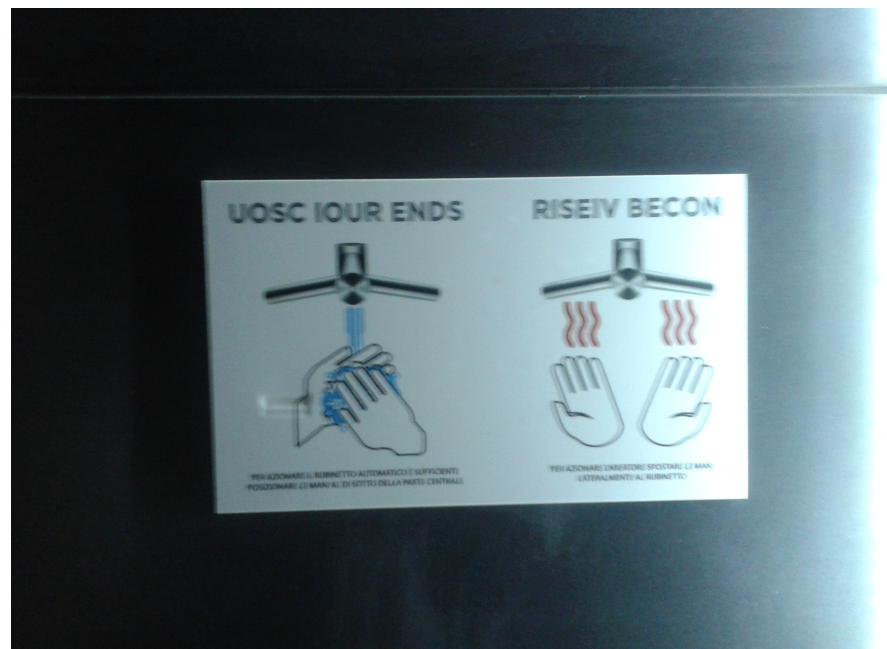
This online feedback, referencing an experiential approach to cultural understanding – note especially Vikram's comments that 'it has to be eaten to experience the wide variety of tastes that are embedded in it'; 'an awesome way to experience Italian way of speaking' – is suggestive of the multi-modal ways in which Fud can be seen to productively jumble negative inscription and undermine classifications of value to create a sense of togetherness. Language is perhaps best understood as the first layer of a broader critique of dominant value systems and meanings which is subtly developed on a visual and sensory level, as the restaurant's décor and use of images, as well as the food itself, are employed to toy with interpretations and question meaning. Even instructions for using the automatic hand-dryer in the restaurant's toilet facilities are an opportunity to query the notion of unequivocal meaning, as the

⁴¹² 'Trip Advisor Review', online:<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d3727084-r421848535-FUD_Bottega_Sicula-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed 11th November 2016].

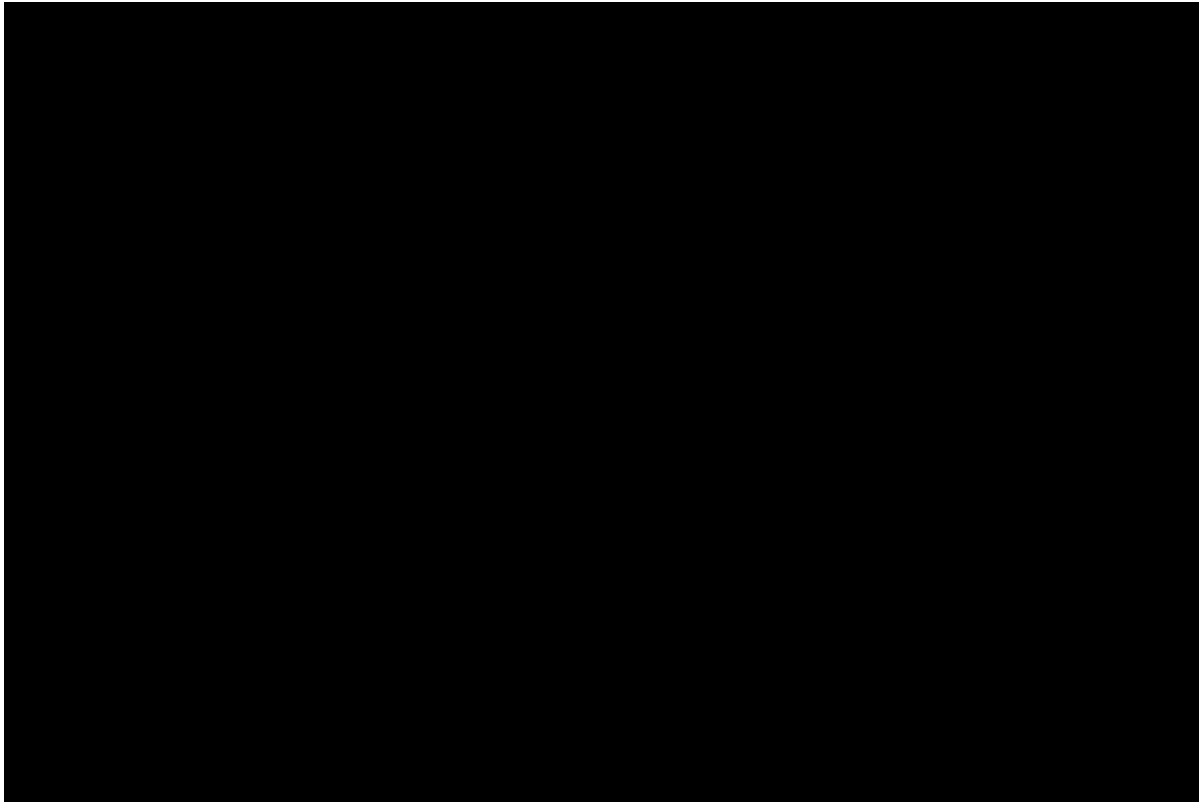
⁴¹³ 'Trip Advisor Review', online:<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d3727084-r406496540-FUD_Bottega_Sicula-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html#REVIEWS> [11th November 2016].

⁴¹⁴ 'Trip Advisor Review', online:<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d3727084-r346270656-FUD_Bottega_Sicula-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html#> [accessed 11th November 2016].

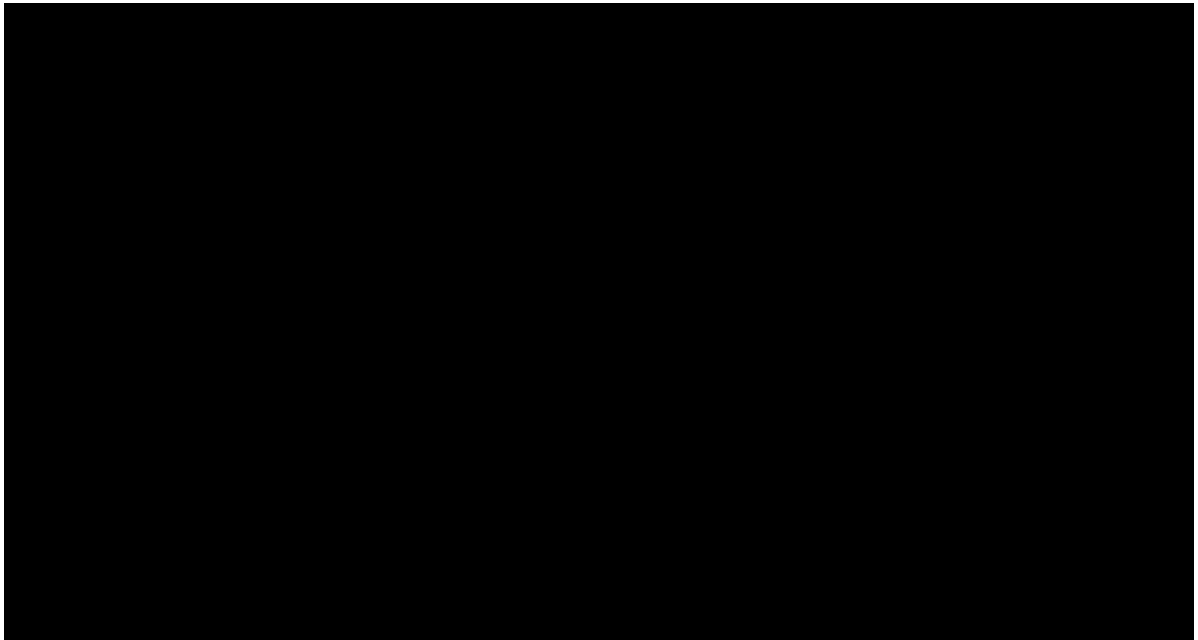
image below indicates. The visual representation of hand-washing, which is reinforced with the phonetic transcription of Italian-inflected pronunciation of English is used to remind customers, 'Wash Your Hands' ('Uosc Iour Ends'). The second instruction, however, a sign to indicate that customers should move their hands to either side of the tap to activate the automatic hand dryer, though supported with an explanation in standard Italian in smaller font underneath, is drolly reinterpreted by the directive title, 'Receive Bacon' ('Riseiv Becon'). Through these games, Fud is a site in which multiple meanings co-exist and the humour of mispronunciation and misunderstanding takes centre-stage. It is therefore a site which celebrates the use-value of language.



Instructions for using the hand dryer: 'Wash Your Hands/Receive Bacon' sign in Fud WC.



Fud Bottega Sicula. Image Source: <<http://www.fud.it>>



Fud Bottega Sicula. Image Source: <<http://www.fud.it>>

Though my focus here is on language, it is important to note that the food itself is a central element of this experiential interrogation of classification and meaning by challenging ideas of ‘authentic’ Sicilian cuisine. Privileging the use of local produce and ingredients such as ‘pane casereccio’, ‘carne di buffalo ragusano’, and ‘verdure selvatiche saltate all’aglio rosso di Nubio’ (‘home-made bread’, ‘Ragusa buffalo meat’, ‘wild vegetables sautéed with Nubio red garlic’) the menu is lauded, as we observed previously in the comment by Lorena Anna P. – ‘excellent food – all Sicilian and artisan produce, (nothing commercial)’ – by local clients on account of its authenticity. And yet the house specialities such as the ‘Am Burgher’ or ‘Cis Burgher’ (‘Hamburger’, ‘Cheeseburger’), together with the online close-ups of hamburgers oozing juice, smothered in dripping cheese, and a contemporary industrial environment offer an alternative portrait to the images of seaside villages of sun-bleached stone, hand-painted horse-drawn carts, and mafia flat-caps that stand as accepted short-hand for Sicilian culture.

This is a reading of authentic which again, as we observed in the last chapter, is related more to artisan creativity than fixed origins; Fud challenges static portraits of Sicily and stresses the porosity of culture by exhibiting an unexpected combination of American and Sicilian traditions. The food it serves bears sensory testimony to how everyday cultural ‘contamination’ may be experienced as a surprising, stimulating, and productive social encounter; as aptly captured in a comment from Veronika F. (Nitra Region, Slovakia), ‘never thought I would have to travel to Sicily to experience the best burger ever!’⁴¹⁵

Fud can thus be interpreted as an inclusive, creative space that calls into query dominant value systems and categories on a linguistic, visual, and sensory level, and I believe there is much work to be done in exploring the significance of quotidian sites, practices, and encounters in inviting critical reflection and fostering meaningful intercultural relationships. Uma Narayam has protested eloquently and convincingly against ‘colonialist eating’, arguing that those who believe concern alone can catalyse progress ‘mistakenly conflate changes in their individual stances and

⁴¹⁵ ‘Trip Advisor Review’, online:<https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187888-d3727084-r413078527-FUD_Bottega_Sicula-Catania_Province_of_Catania_Sicily.html#CHECK_RATES_CONT> [accessed 11th November 2016].

attitudes with concrete changes in social relationships of power',⁴¹⁶ and I appreciate her scepticism regarding the limit of this type of critical reflection to instigate 'real' change. I am, however, in the end more convinced by Abarca's optimism; citing her experience of Mexican working-class kitchens as a key influence in her academic approach, Abarca argues that the slow process of wringing tangible societal and institutional change 'often begins by first planting seeds of concern and reflection'.⁴¹⁷ Fud's teasing use of language values in an everyday space seems to me a provocative example of how language itself can offer an invitation to engage with the (mis)pronunciations, (mis)understandings, and meanings of cultural otherness as a lived experience; crucially, it marks language as a *social* construct. We will now explore this idea theoretically before considering what it might mean in language learning.

Contemporary sociolinguistics research is increasingly devoted to the potential of language to generate a social space which is both inclusive and critical; the concept of 'translanguaging' is a focal point of much of this analysis and it seems to me worth clarifying the relevance of this concept for the Modern Languages scholar. Coined by Cen Williams in reference to pedagogy in the bilingual classroom,⁴¹⁸ translanguaging identifies the '*multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds*'.⁴¹⁹ Translanguaging encompasses the entire range of practices traditionally associated with multilingualism, such as code-switching and code-mixing (tags which in themselves are fluid and contested),⁴²⁰ but as an analytical concept is distinct from this range of practices on ideological grounds. Whilst code-switching implies that multilinguals manipulate *separate linguistic systems*, translanguaging emphasizes instead the uniqueness of the individual speaker's mental grammar - what sociolinguists call the idiolect.⁴²¹ As Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García and Wallis Reid point out, languages

⁴¹⁶ Uma Narayman, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 182.

⁴¹⁷ Abarca, p. 20.

⁴¹⁸ Cen Williams, 'Arfarniad o Ddulliau Dysgu ac Addysgu yng Nghyd-destun Addysg Uwchradd Ddwieithog' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1994). Author's emphases.

⁴¹⁹ Ofelia García, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 45.

⁴²⁰ Li Wei, p. 1223.

⁴²¹ Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García and Wallis Reid, 'Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics', *Applied Linguistics Review* 6.3 (2015), 281-307 (p. 293).

cannot be described purely in linguistic terms because they are not really linguistic entities; their boundaries are established on social, political and cultural grounds rather than linguistic ones.⁴²² Otheguy, García and Reid's explanation bears extensive citation for its convincing clarity (I also couldn't resist their culinary approach):

The Japanese guest couldn't decide which of the meals counted as Cuban and which as American, even though most laymen in New York can easily tell which is which. The question for the Japanese guest was not a culinary one, was not about the meals themselves: about what ingredients they consisted of, how they were prepared, how they tasted. Rather, it was a question about the classification of meals according to their place of origin. This was an item of cultural knowledge that the Japanese guest lacked. Similarly, linguists cannot tell us whether or not to count the speech of Barcelona and Valencia (or Madrid and Havana, or Madrid and Lisbon) as versions of the same language because they are not really linguistic questions. Rather, they are questions about the political and cultural identities of speakers, an item of cultural knowledge that is widely shared: laymen usually recognize Madrid and Havana as speaking the same language because of historical and cultural factors connecting Spain and Cuba; they usually recognize Madrid and Lisbon as speaking different languages because historical and cultural ties have become loosened for several centuries now; and they argue about Barcelona and Valencia because the historical and cultural factors are too complicated to allow for easy settlement. A linguist can join the laymen in stating these bits of cultural knowledge, and may, as a citizen, take part in these debates, but cannot, *qua linguist*, that is, *qua* student of lexicon and structure, weigh in with a technical position on the matter.⁴²³

We can therefore understand translanguaging as 'the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state)

⁴²² Otheguy, García and Reid, p. 291.

⁴²³ Ibid., pp. 287-8.

languages'.⁴²⁴ Languages, on the other hand, are best recognized as 'groupings of idiolects of people with shared social, political or ethnic identities that, once so grouped, are described using linguistic terms that tend to give the mistaken impression that the grouping was based on linguistic grounds in the first place'.⁴²⁵

One of my favourite examples of translanguaging is French-Armenian singer-songwriter Charles Aznavour's popular hit, 'For Me Formidable', cited at the beginning of this chapter. Aznavour's crooning deliberation over which might be the most appropriate language to woo his addressee gives us a revealing glimpse of the perspective of multilingual speakers. In the song, French and English are never directly named. Aznavour contrasts instead 'Shakespeare's language' with 'that of Molière', hinting at the lack of correspondence between the external categories and the internal linguistic perspective of the speaker; whilst the words Aznavour uses can be split into two groups by listeners and identified as English or French, Aznavour is simply deploying his own linguistic repertoire (albeit in a rehearsed performance). For multilinguals like Aznavour, the external category of a named language is unrelated to the idiolect of the speaker.⁴²⁶ Crucially, as Otheguy, García and Reid point out, the idiolects of monolinguals and multilinguals differ only in quantitative, rather than qualitative, terms; how monolingual *and* multilingual speakers deploy their idiolect is marked by the negotiation of social and locational constraints (so, following the examples Otheguy, García and Reid use, a monolingual English speaker might say 'kitty-cat' to a child, but is more likely to choose 'cat' when speaking with an adult, whilst an adult fluent in English and Italian could select from 'kittycat', 'cat', 'micia', or 'gatto'); multilinguals just have a wider pool of selection.⁴²⁷

The point I want to stress here is that *all* language use is constructed through social exchange. The collaborative process is simply rendered more evident when translanguaging is seen through the eyes of a speaker who knows only one of the named languages. The seamless ease with which Aznavour interchanges French and English in this song is of course being paraded for public entertainment, but the creativity he exemplifies in pirouetting through and across languages is no different

⁴²⁴ Otheguy, García and Reid, p. 283.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., p. 291.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 293.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p. 292.

in principle to that embodied in quotidian exchanges between multilingual speakers. The mixing of Italian and English in phrases I have become completely used to hearing and reading in exchanges in the Italian department at Warwick such as ‘ci prendiamo il coffee?’, or ‘ho mandato questa email a un'altra persona per errore, I am forwarding it to you!’, are not, I think, a switch between Italian and English in which the speaker is consciously trying to dazzle me with the flexibility of their language skills. They are simply addressing me using the words that form part of our shared vocabulary. Thus Li Wei suggests that translanguaging creates ‘a social world where the individual feels a sense of connectedness with others, and that sense of connectedness has an impact on the social behaviours of the actors and of others concerned’.⁴²⁸

Emphasizing the interactivity of this process, Li Wei suggests the ‘translanguaging space’ that individuals create in this way is a habitable between, and a site which is ‘inherently critical and creative’.⁴²⁹ And though research into translanguaging has tended to privilege applied contexts and microanalysis,⁴³⁰ more recently there has been a drive to develop new ways of researching these practices which can investigate the interrelation of language use with a more holistic analysis of the social and cultural environment in which they take place. What interests me most about these new approaches is the space they grant to the use-value of language. Creese, Blackledge and Hu’s work on stereotypes as a resource for conviviality amidst difference through their analysis of translanguaging in a butchers’ stall in the linguistically and ethnically diverse city of Birmingham is exemplary of the insight promised by contextualizing a sensitive attention to micro-practices.⁴³¹ A similar example from a very different circumstance is a section Li Wei includes in his study of the discursive construction of identities amongst multilingual Chinese youth, ‘Fun

⁴²⁸ Li Wei, p. 1234.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 1225.

⁴³⁰ Li Wei, ‘The Analysis of Conversational Code-Switching’, in *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity*, ed. by Peter Auer (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) pp. 156-76 (p. 173).

⁴³¹ Angela Creese, Adrian Blackledge, and Rachel Hu, ‘Noticing and commenting on social difference: A translanguaging and translation perspective’, *Working Papers in Translanguaging and Translation* (WP.10), 2016, online: <<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/social-difference.pdf>>. See pp. 17-21 and in particular p. 19.

with words', in which he describes instances of participants' mixing of languages to comic effect.⁴³² For example:

The following extract was recorded during an interview with the three youths together. I asked what they would like to do or be when they graduate from university.

Chris: 以后工作就当“白领狗”，给人公司打工！

(In future (I will) work as a “white-collar dog”, working for someone's company.)

Lawson and Roland both laugh.

Roland: You are already bilingual!

Lawson: Good one.

Chris: That's what I mean.

Chris wants to work in the world of banking and finance, hence “white-collar”. But he knows he would be working for other people, at least initially, and has to work very hard, hence “dog”. The Chinese phrase “white-collar dog” is pronounced as bai ling gou, which sounds like bilingual, which is the pun that Chris evidently intended and which is understood by the other two to good effect. The example shows not only the young men's high linguistic competence but also their creativity and confidence in who they are. It appears that Chris created the pun at the spur-of-the-moment. There was no evidence that he had planned it in advance of the interview, and I did not hear them using it again. But the phrase certainly impressed on my mind, and I believe that the three young men would also remember it.⁴³³

Li Wei does not really go beyond reporting and explaining this exchange and other instances of ‘fun with words’ – very briefly he mentions ‘crossing’, the imitation of Chinese speakers from other parts of China – but the admiration of these practices that his commentary bespeaks is telling. He stresses the creativity and confidence

⁴³² Li Wei 2010, pp. 1226-7.

⁴³³ Ibid.

indicated by these language games, and pleasure at being rendered participant; in other words, the use-value of language.

In my analysis of Fud, I have sought to tease out the implications of similar comedy and linguistic games by situating them within a broader cultural context and positing their significance in terms of the contestation of a value hierarchy and affirmation of a local sense of meaning and worth. By focusing on one example of how linguistic practice and, crucially, 'play', can work in unexpected ways to create a sense 'connectedness', as Li Wei puts it, to contest and re-inscribe value, my aim is to fix more attention on the use-value of language. This is therefore an invitation to dialogue about how scholars might engage with a variety of intermedial forms of contemporary cultural expression to critically explore language as a quotidian site of interaction. I'd like now to elaborate on this invitation by considering the use-value of language in a different context: the language learning classroom.

ii. Collaborative translation: fun with words in language learning

If we accept that any named language is a socially constructed object,⁴³⁴ it follows that attention to the process of social construction of the named language is an imperative element of learning that language. And whilst it may seem a given that the study of language cannot be separated from the study of culture, my own experience of language learning and language teaching in Higher Education in England suggests that there is a distinct divide between the two, particularly at beginner level. In this part of the chapter I want to address a concern expressed in feedback forms at TML events querying the implications of a transnational approach to Modern Languages teaching for language learning by reporting on an attempt to bridge the boundary between teaching language and teaching culture through the application of one model of translation in language teaching in Higher Education. First, though, a brief contextual overview: Italian is the fourth most popular language in Scottish and English undergraduate degree programmes after French, Spanish and German, but it is the only language out of the four that can be studied from ab initio level at all Higher Education institutes offering Italian in England.⁴³⁵ Almost a quarter of degree

⁴³⁴ Otheguy, García and Reid, p. 283.

⁴³⁵ Enza Siciliano Verruccio, 'Ab initio language degree programmes in HE institutions in England and Scotland: a mapping survey and a case study', online:

courses in Italian or featuring Italian as a named component (Joint Honours degrees or major/minor combinations with Italian) do not stipulate a language qualification in their entry criteria.⁴³⁶ Most students of Italian at University level in the UK therefore take up the language from scratch, sometimes without prior experience of learning any language bar their native English. This means that beginner students of Italian usually have several hours of compulsory language classes – an intensive introduction to the grammatical foundations of Italian, and one or two cultural modules in which they are grouped with students who already have knowledge of Italian to study literature, film, history, politics, or a combination of the above. They may or may not receive additional language support for the cultural modules.⁴³⁷ In application, if not in principle, the teaching of Italian in English Higher Education institutions is therefore markedly different from Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches which seek to combine teaching content with additional language acquisition; approaches which remain primarily the domain of the private sector and of EFL teaching.⁴³⁸ Though it is assumed that the types of socio-historical and aesthetic issues students will tackle in their cultural studies will be raised in their language learning classes too, in practice the extent to which language teaching incorporates cultural reflection will rely on the disposition of the teacher and his/her material selection. The question of whether and how critical reflection can be systematically encouraged in language teaching, and particularly at beginner level, is therefore a pertinent one which I think deserves further attention within the overall framework of the TML project. In light of the arguments this thesis has made thus far, I want to suggest that one way Modern Languages can cultivate a critical interest in cultural encounter is to make evident the heterogeneity of language as a social construction through using the process of translation in all levels of language learning. I will use this final part of the chapter to report on a student-led scheme which tried to do precisely this, analysing the possibility a particular model of

<https://www.llas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/nodes/6399/Mapping_survey_case_study_final%20doc%20enza_rev%20formatted%20FINAL%20agb.pdf> [accessed 21 June 2017], p. 9 and p. 19.

⁴³⁶ No specific language requirements are stipulated in the entry criteria of 23% of degree courses in Italian or featuring Italian as a named component (Joint Honours or Major/Minor combinations in Italian). See Siciliano Verruccio, p. 12, for further details.

⁴³⁷ The University of Warwick provides dedicated reading groups for beginner Italian students to facilitate the study of literature in Italian.

⁴³⁸ David Lasagabaster and Juan Manuel Sierra, 'Immersion and CLIL in English: more differences than similarities', *ELT Journal*, 64.4 (2010), DOI: <<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccp082>>.

collaborative translation offers for a critical perspective and outlining future opportunities and potential challenges.

Bringing together an interdisciplinary team of early career researchers, students and community practitioners, the project 'Collaborative Translation: A Model for Inclusion' (Monash and Warwick, July 2016-July 2017) coordinated by Jessica Trevitt and Gioia Panzarella investigated the implications of a specific model of collaborative translation in a range of contexts (literary, language teaching, migrant experience) in terms of inclusivity: specifically, it focused on developing a more inclusive approach to translation that can connect different language proficiencies and different disciplines as well as Higher Education with industry.⁴³⁹ Gioia and I applied Jessica's model of translation in a series of English and Italian collaborative translation workshops we offered to undergraduate and Erasmus students at the University of Warwick. Through the model, Jessica aimed to develop what she terms, via reference to Yasemin Yildiz's recognition of the persistence of a monolingual paradigm,⁴⁴⁰ a 'postmonolingual' approach to collaborative translation, which challenges the necessity of language skillsets by including collaborators who would be unable complete the task alone, but can negotiate to reach the final product, thus requiring participants to combine complementary linguistic and disciplinary skillsets.⁴⁴¹

We applied the model at Warwick by offering two sets of language workshops, Beginner's Italian for fluent speakers of English led or, more accurately, as we shall see, 'facilitated', by Gioia and observed by myself, and Intermediate/Advanced English for fluent speakers of Italian facilitated by myself and observed by Gioia. Due to the larger group size of the second group, we subsequently introduced a second facilitator figure. We made this decision in response to the first round of student feedback, in which students suggested they would prefer more contact with a native English speaker. Emily Roper, a BA Modern Languages finalist at Warwick acted as a joint facilitator for two of the English workshops for Italian students.

⁴³⁹ 'Transcollaborate' project website, online: <<https://transcollaborate.wordpress.com>>.

⁴⁴⁰ Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond The Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), pp. 2-6.

⁴⁴¹ Jessica Trevitt, 'Collaborative Translation: A Model for Inclusion': <<https://transcollaborate.wordpress.com/173-2/>>.

We tried to reach a non-specialist audience by presenting the workshops as an opportunity for students to enhance their CV. The Italian workshops were very successful in this respect; out of the total nine students who attended at least one workshop, we only had one student who was studying Italian as part of her degree, with other participants primarily from History and Classics. The English workshops relied on the cohort of Italian students spending a semester or academic year at Warwick to improve their English as part of the ERASMUS exchange programme, so as a group they shared a more vested interest in learning English. Most of them were nearing completion or already held (in each session there were a minimum of three postgraduate Italian students) degrees in literature or translation with a focus on anglophone texts. There was a high level of interest in this second set of workshops and we decided to cap attendance at sixteen participants to enable a greater degree of exchange with each other and with the workshop leader or, as we were careful to term it, facilitator.

In both sets of workshops, we endeavoured to highlight that our position was that of a facilitator: we could answer questions about the source texts, but we couldn't provide translation solutions in the target language or comment on their accuracy. Our role was to draw attention to what, in our view, were the most salient points of each text; usually words which had perhaps particular cultural nuances or were in some way challenging (for example, dialect or regional language, conflicting connotations, or referring to a specific practice) or, with the beginner students of Italian, grammar conventions which the students would need to understand.

Instead of expecting us to comment on the solutions they proposed, students were encouraged to question us to weigh up the aptness of the solutions they elaborated in the target language; they were necessarily responsible for selecting the most effective translations. This was because in our application of the model, the departure point was a text written in the facilitator's first language. Facilitators and students communicated in the primary language of the students which was also the target text language. So the facilitator acted as the source-language collaborator and the students as target-language collaborators, and the vehicular language of the session was the target language; the language in which the students were already fluent rather than the one they were learning. In the English language workshops, all the students were native Italian speakers and the class was held in Italian but the

facilitator's first language was English; in the Italian language workshops, all the students were fluent in English (though one student had learnt English as an additional language) and the workshops were held in English, but the facilitator's first language was Italian.

We offered a total of seven workshops; three English and three Italian, then, after this first stage, we decided to capitalize on the enthusiasm of participants by opening up a competition for students to host a workshop themselves. We supported the successful applicant, Martina Severin, a postgraduate student from La Sapienza University of Rome researching the translation of Shakespeare into comics, and a participant in the English workshops, in coordinating this final workshop in which she had proposed to explore Italian regional language through collaboratively translating Antonello Venditti's song 'Roma Capoccia'. Each of the seven sessions lasted an hour and a half. There was a fifteen-minute informal introduction at the start of each session. Facilitators and students worked together for one hour on the text, and we reserved fifteen minutes for participant feedback at the end of each session. During this final fifteen minutes, students were invited to respond anonymously to a form which asked them the following questions (in English and Italian respectively):

1. What is the most useful thing you have learned this session?
2. What didn't you find productive?
3. What did you find challenging?
4. What surprised you about the session?
5. Any other comments:

They were also invited to comment orally on the session to the observer, in a separate room to the workshop facilitator(s), with any suggestions or responses.

Drawing on this feedback, reflections offered by Emily and Martina, and observation notes of the workshops, I want to elaborate on the type of pleasure students identified in the process to demonstrate practically how the use-value of language can in fact be accessed just through a few words, at all levels of language learning, and indicate the prospective uses of this type of translation. I make no claim for innovation here. Far from it; as Anthony Pym points out in his provocatively-titled but very credible argument, 'Where Translation Studies Lost the Plot: Relations with

Language Teaching’,⁴⁴² despite the ideological disjuncture that characterized these two fields in the 1980s and 1990s, there have always been attempts to re-stitch this now tempestuous relationship, which as recently as the 1970s was conceived of as a mutually formative one.⁴⁴³ More recently, this interest has been reflected in policy recommendations, with European Commission and Directorate-General for Translation suggesting that:

L2 teachers at all levels should have access to a communicative view of translation, either through publications, online materials or short training courses. This is particularly necessary in the teaching of English, where the methodologies and textbooks that are institutionally dominant worldwide do not include translation.⁴⁴⁴

Rather than originality, then, what I want to contribute is an empirically-grounded investigation of the feasibility and of the potential of collaborative translation in all levels of language learning in Higher Education.

The first and most obvious benefit that strikes me when reflecting on this data is the development of student confidence. Far from being intimidated by being confronted by a text in a language which was decidedly, at that point, foreign,⁴⁴⁵ after some initial hesitation and doubt as to their role, the responsibility of selecting the most appropriate terms and the *difficulty* of agreeing on one answer as a group seemed to

⁴⁴² Anthony Pym, ‘Where Translation Studies Lost the Plot: Relations with Language Teaching’, a talk given at Rikkyo University, Tokyo, 14th December 2015. Revised version available online: <https://www.academia.edu/24588560/Where_Translation_Studies_Lost_the_Plot_Relations_with_Language_Teaching?auto=download> [accessed 21 June 2017].

⁴⁴³ Pym 2015, p. 2, cf. James S. Holmes, ‘The Name and Nature of Translation Studies’, paper presented at Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics, Copenhagen, 21-26 August 1972, online: <<https://archive.org/details/Holmes1972TheNameAndNatureOfTranslationStudies>> [accessed 21 June 2017], p. 182, and Venuti 2000, p. 190.

⁴⁴⁴ European Commission and Directorate-General for Translation, *Translation and Language Learning: The Role of Translation in the Teaching of Languages in the European Union: A Study* (Luxembourg: Publications Office, 2013), p. 139.

⁴⁴⁵ It is worth mentioning that we held the first workshop in early November, so even the sole student who was studying Italian had only had two weeks of language lessons. It is also worth considering that as all the participants in the Italian language workshops were in their first year of University and all the participants in the English language workshops were at the start of their Erasmus year, we can assume that for many this was their first experience of moving away from home and that they had only been living in Warwick for a short time - in short, a time of general upheaval!

increasingly inspire beginner and intermediate/advanced students alike. Looking back on the first Italian language workshop, it is clear that the responsibility of acting as the target-language translator was not, to begin with, a natural position for the beginner students. My notes below describe the situation at the beginning of the translation session (after the initial fifteen-minute introduction) when the students had begun work on the lyrics of Daniele Silvestri's 'Sale' (2006), a song which plays on the multiple meanings of this word in Italian:

Gioia directed the students' attention towards the prevalence of the word 'sale' by asking students to identify recurring word(s). They successfully guessed at one of its meanings as she encouraged them to consider in conjunction with vocabulary similar to English (sale iodato, sale carbonato). The discussion returned to the idea of 'election' and students, with only limited prompting, identified that 'sale' must have more than one meaning. Students again seemed unsure of their role of contributing translation, looking for Gioia to give a definitive answer. As a group they proposed a (I thought impressive) translation of 'to take office' but seemed unsure as Gioia responded 'maybe, that could be it'. As Gioia highlighted the three meanings encountered so far (orally); salt, hall, to 'take office', students seemed more confident due to her assertiveness in teaching style, but still glanced hesitantly at other members of the group. I think this was due to a combination of factors 1) a correct answer was not supplied (it is worth highlighting at this point that none of the students had undertaken translation modules so were unlikely to be familiar with the notion that there is not only one correct answer, something confirmed in the subsequent group discussion); and especially, 2) they did not receive validation of their answers from Gioia, who replied only with a 'could be'; 'might be', and encouraged them to discuss and propose more answers. For example, when the most confident student in the group asked for confirmation on her idea that 'salt' could be a form of personification, Gioia replied 'could be, let's keep that in mind and come back to it later'.

Yet by the end of the session, it was precisely this ambiguity that students seemed to find exciting. In the oral feedback group, participants were very enthusiastic about

the session as a whole but commented especially positively about having to explain some concepts to Gioia; 'we felt like the teacher sometimes', being in a small group and 'having lots of opportunities to speak', and the general group dynamic which was 'friendly and interactive'. Students also commented positively and were surprised about the lesson styles ('I was expecting more of a lesson and to learn to say things like "Hello" and "My name is..."') and being encouraged to reflect on their own language through translation, which they identified as an element that is likely to be of long-term benefit rather than an immediate benefit ('this will indirectly help me think a lot more about language'). These comments were verified in the anonymous feedback forms in both the English and the Italian workshops: *not* finding or agreeing upon a solution was not seen as a problem, with students consistently commenting positively on both the unexpected familiarity of language, for example noting corresponding idiomatic expressions with a similar etymology to that of their first language(s), and expressing surprise at 'discovering how many differences there are between languages and how much I've still got to learn!', and 'how fun it can be to learn English with the right method'.

In the second session of the English language workshops, participants seemed comfortable with their role of source-language collaborator and readily took the lead in questioning Gioia about different connotations of words in Italian to identify possible solutions. For example, they arrived at the translation of 'soggiorno' in the following way:

Gioia: Let's look at this word, *soggiorno*. So we know it is a room. What other word can you recognise here?

Several students: Day.

Gioia: Yes, a room where you spend the day.

At this point different students contributed and all seemed confident in taking the lead by direct questions at Gioia.

Student L: Would you watch TV in there?

Gioia: Yes.

Student H: Like, with sofas?

Gioia: Yes.

Student L: Yeah, that's a 'living room' (other students nodding agreement).

In this part of the session, which concentrated on understanding the vocabulary related to the home, I noted students adding lots of commentary to their copies of the translation. The discussion of the word 'ammezzato' was particularly interesting in that the group could not agree on a solution and were happy to carry on discussing other terms once they had noted several options. Whilst they were interested in the possible translations ('mezzanine', 'balcony'), and their respective connotations, which they suggested referenced class differences, they decided to leave it unresolved. In my experience this is unusual for beginner language students, who tend to prefer more precise definitions of vocabulary. Gioia did facilitate this by commenting that she herself was not sure of the connotations of this term as used throughout Italy, but the important thing was to understand the implication of 'mezzo' as 'half', but they did not need to be excessively guided to make this judgement. To me, this indicates how an increasing linguistic self-assurance actually arose out of doubts, questions, uncertainty and a lack of conclusive answers.

Linked to the students' growing confidence as language learners, I want to highlight the potential for these types of workshops in providing an empowering and practical opportunity for students-as-teachers to gain experience of planning and coordinating a lesson for their peers. Of her experience as workshop facilitator for the Italian students of English, Emily wrote:

Before starting university, I had never encountered translation as it is often considered too difficult a task for intermediate and beginner language learners. However, the transcollaborate model has shown me how translation can be a valuable tool in language learning at various levels. I participated in workshops as a facilitator and the experience opened my eyes to how useful the practice can be in this regard. For example, in the first workshop we worked on the translation of a piece of literary text in English which contained much informal vocabulary and dialogue. The translation of this type of language was in some respects challenging, as it highlighted some regional differences in language use in the UK. However, it was also extremely rewarding for both me and I believe the students, who seemed really enthusiastic about learning new words such as 'ta' and 'cheesy'. Words like this may not be considered by some to be 'proper' English, however they are used in everyday life in the

UK and therefore I consider that this form of language is extremely valuable for foreign learners, as they often don't have access to this type of informal language through traditional teaching methods. It was this aspect that has interested me most within the project; the ways translation may be an excellent tool in teaching non-standard forms of language.

Martina similarly stressed the ultimately rewarding challenge of coordinating an Italian language workshop for her English peers:

As a student, it has been one of the most challenging experiences I have ever had. I have already had an experience on teaching with children, and this workshop makes me understand how it is different dealing with young people or adults. It has been exciting, but also incredibly stressful - I was so nervous at the beginning! But I think the workshop went really well, the participants seemed to be interested and participated actively. I had planned different topics for the discussion before of the session, but, of course, in a collaborative session different ideas arise. I am really happy for what we have found and the nice translations we arrived together. The most challenging moment was the last part of the workshop, the discussion, it has been difficult to find ways to involve people in the discussion, make them speaking and sharing their opinions, but I think I did quite well. I am completely satisfied by this experience.⁴⁴⁶

I dwell slightly on the satisfaction that Emily, Martina, and the other participants articulate because it is linked to the second, more consequential point I want to make. If we accept that teaching in Modern has an ethical obligation to seek to render students sensitive to the way in which human experience is mediated by language, to the way in which language makes a difference, the pleasurable element of language learning as we observed it in these sessions has significant pedagogic consequences, because the enjoyment that students expressed was, crucially, related to *not* finding unequivocal solutions and to recognising the heterogeneity of

⁴⁴⁶ Martina has written a blog post about her experience, available online: <<https://transcollaborate.wordpress.com/2017/06/26/warwick-italian-language-workshop-roman-words-in-roma-capoccia-by-antonello-venditti/>> [accessed 22 August 2017].

their first language. We would therefore suggest that this collaborative approach to translation is one that brings with it the promise of challenging assumptions and problematizing practice. This takes us back to Pennycook's mediations on the notion of criticality and in particular his suggestion that critical practice in language teaching should be about generating a means to think otherwise and 'seize the chance to do something different'.⁴⁴⁷ His description of the classroom as 'a pantomime, a play of languages and ideas', in which we 'watch amid the swirling currents of interactions', and 'know that we can only understand some of what is happening and can never know what is about to come',⁴⁴⁸ I think captures the lively and unpredictable scene that Martina, Emily, Gioia and I all experienced; impassioned discussions as to whether Geordie and Somerset and Genovese and Neapolitan counted as 'language' or the various connotations of 'lounge', 'living room', 'family room', 'front room', and 'drawing room' (and the rest!). One student's comment that 'translating idiomatic expressions was really interesting because it created dilemmas even in our mother tongue', sums up well the enthusiasm of multiple participants about the heterogeneity of language; rather than finding this variability intimidating, students were inspired by the sheer variability of their idiolects; another English student of Italian suggested that 'the discussion made me question things from English which is a transferable skill you can use in learning any languages'. Li Wei's assertion that language learning is a life-long process for native speakers too was practically enacted by the participants of these sessions as they set about critically reflecting on their own language and, I would argue, disinventing the myth of monolingualism.⁴⁴⁹

Finally, developing my point about the debate in which the students engaged, I think it is important to stress the space granted by this type of collaborative translation for *disagreement*. Because our emphasis was on translation as a process rather than a finished product, what we noted was how the labour of translation and collaboration was made visible in a stimulating way. Learners were in charge of the process; they developed the translation conversation in line with their own areas of expertise. As we have seen, this can enhance confidence, but equally, in highlighting the validity of each participants' individual perspective, this is a model which actively promotes

⁴⁴⁷ Pennycook, p. 131.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

⁴⁴⁹ Li Wei, 'Translation, Translanguaging and Modern Languages', presented at 'Transnationalizing Modern Languages: Reshaping the Discipline for the 21st Century' conference, 26 February 2016, The British Academy, London.

the negotiation of different positions whilst allowing for the possibility that they may not settle together on a solution. The ‘translation conversation’ that participants engage in can therefore be understood as a dialogic one in which participants increase their mutual awareness and therefore knowledge, without necessarily arriving at an agreement. It seems to me that there is therefore real potential for the development of this type of translation in both the language learning classroom and in contexts where language learning is not a specific goal, but where the reflective insights that arise from the guided analysis of just a few words can be employed as a part of a critical process. The work of students from Drummond Community High School in response to the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci seems to me exemplary of the linguistically-sensitive creativity that collaborative translation can realistically animate. As part of their research on da Vinci, art students at Drummond selected key words related to a theme that they had chosen which Jacopo Colombini, my fellow PhD student on the TML project, helped them translate into Italian. The students then developed these words into a mirrored text, in the style of da Vinci’s notebooks; they explored movement between languages in a way that was relevant to their own work.⁴⁵⁰ Via this type of attention to translation as an intermedial process, the work of translating a particular phrase or term from another language could provide a stimulus for a range of creative responses and collaborative translation and could be brought into the study of fine arts, for example, or of film, within schools and Higher and Further Education institutions.

Within the ‘Collaborative Translation’ project, we tried to generate discussion of translation as an intermedial practice by selecting texts which were accessible through different media forms and by encouraging participants to reflect upon the translation choices that had been made across these different media. The first English language workshop was based around a song which participants listened to *before* considering the written text; in the second workshop, we worked on David Nicholls’s popular novel *One Day* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2009). Several students had already seen the film based on the book, which enabled one group to

⁴⁵⁰ You can find out more about the collaboration between Drummond, Castlebrae and TML in the video available online: <<https://vimeo.com/158337501>> [accessed 21 June 2017]. Some of the prints produced by the young artists from Drummond Community High School in response to Edoardo Paolozzi’s experience of moving between languages and cultures are displayed here: <<http://www.transnationalmodernlanguages.ac.uk/2014/12/14/pop-paolozzi/>> [accessed 22 August 2017].

discuss the choice of an American actress for the Yorkshire-accented female protagonist. The third workshop focused on oral language use by considering proverbs and idioms. In the Italian workshops, participants worked on a newspaper article in addition to the song lyrics and memoir mentioned above. This aspect of the project is as yet very underdeveloped, but deserves further attention for the promise it offers of engaging with the audio, visual, oral and more broadly material culture that students already make use of.

Similarly, if such a model is to be applied to language learning in any sort of systematic fashion one essential concern is that of assessment. What skills should be evaluated, and how? Gioia and I were troubled with this concern in the planning stages of the project. Stephanie Karl's audio records of collaborative translation in English language learning encouragingly capture her students' enthusiasm at the cultural knowledge, self-reflective critical engagement and crucially, negotiating capacities that we have found this type of work to require, and Karl's employment of peer-review process, in which students correct the work of fellow students rather than it being corrected by the teacher, is one solution that would be interesting to trial.⁴⁵¹ When we designed our workshops it was not entirely clear to us what we wanted to assess, which is why we eventually decided not to try to measure the participants' linguistic proficiencies in any way, but to allow time at the end of each workshop for them to articulate their interests, reservations, and after the final workshops, the skills they thought they had developed and to suggest themselves how these competencies might be assessed. Some students proposed that an edited commentary of a translation in which students could expand upon their dilemmas with problematic words would be an effective way to measure the cultural knowledge they felt they needed to call upon to process the tasks they were set. It was both rewarding and thought-provoking to hear students argue that there was a need for the collaborative and contested nature of the translation to emerge. Though we are yet to resolve the issue of assessment, these suggestions are indicative, I think, of the promise of collaborative translation as a critical classroom practice.

⁴⁵¹ Stephanie Karl, 'Group Translation in English Language Teaching', paper presented at *Transcollaborate: A Symposium on Collaborative Translation*, Monash Prato Centre, 3-4 July 2017.

iii. Chapter Conclusions

David Gramling is speaking specifically about translation when he suggested that there is a need to ‘rehearse’ collaboration.⁴⁵² Richard Sennet, on the other hand, is contemplating conversation more broadly when he contrasts dialectic and dialogic approaches, suggesting that a cooperative impulse of either sympathy or empathy is stimulated by listening well; sympathy is ‘the more arousing’, Sennet explains, and whilst empathy is ‘cooler’, because it demands that we focus outside ourselves, he contests that in a dialogic conversation ‘people do not neatly fit together like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, yet they can get both knowledge and pleasure from their exchanges’.⁴⁵³

Unconsciously echoing one another, both Gramling and Sennet articulate the need to *practice* collaboration, to cultivate the skill of disagreeing productively. It is my firm conviction that the duty of Modern Languages is to generate a space in which students can develop such a skill. In this chapter, I have emphasized language itself as a site of encounter, firstly within the public space of an informal bar and restaurant, and secondly by showing such an encounter can be encouraged in the language learning classroom. The word games of Fud provided an example of how words in everyday sites are windows onto stories and histories of disputed meanings. I have argued that by phonetically transcribing the Italian pronunciation of English words, Fud creates an elaborate in-joke, re-inscribing accented English, something seen as negative, perhaps indicative of cultural ignorance, with a positive use-value. I have also suggested that this unexpected manipulation of presumed meaning is developed on both visual and sensory levels, with visitors to the site being unexpectedly greeted with food that does not match the typical image of authentic Sicilian cuisine. Again, then, as in the last chapter, we find authenticity is related to social exchange, and the social construction of language revealed.

Because of the complex subtext carried by words, their translation can be an opportunity for critical reflection and the sensitive negotiation of difference, even at

⁴⁵² David Gramling, ‘Seven Stadia Long: On the Disorderly Social Sojourn of Transcollaboration’, keynote address at *Transcollaborate: A Symposium on Collaborative Translation*, Monash Prato Centre, 3-4 July 2017.

⁴⁵³ Sennet, p. 24.

beginner level. This is, at least, what we observed when we experimented with the use of collaborative translation, as the second half of the chapter reported. In our workshops, we found that a particular model of collaborative translation in which students act as target-language collaborators encouraged a self-reflexive approach to language. This seems to me a very effective way of building ethnographic approaches and the study of material culture directly into the language learning process and capitalizing on language as a social product. This exploration of how the labour of the craft of 'carrying across' a cultural artefact to a new context collaboratively is in its early stages, and not without its challenges. The question of what skills to assess, and how, is one that needs to be addressed before taking this further. Given, though, that we have found this to be a practice which can enhance learners' confidence and linguistic sensitivity at the same time as fostering a reflexive engagement with foreignness, it seems not only a feasible, but also a promising and exciting route to explore.

Conclusion

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, my primary objective has been to resume and advance a dialogue about ethnography within Modern Languages. I have sought to do this via a case-study of the application of ethnographic methods, taking an ethnographic approach to Italian material culture, in particular food-related culture. Over the following pages, I will review the work of individual chapters, and we will revisit earlier calls for disciplinary recognition of the validity of ethnography in light of these arguments. Here, again, my intention is to foster discussion by evidencing synchronies between ethnography and the work that has already been done and *is* being done, rather than make claims for innovation. I will use this space to reflect on the failures as well as the findings of this project, with a view to indicating avenues for further inquiry and affirm the present moment as a particularly opportune one to explore ethnographic approaches within Modern Languages.

Here, I want to reach out to two types of readers. One is someone like me, at the start of this project: someone who is relatively confident offering a close reading of literary texts and films, who enjoys the security and freedom of a Barthesian approach to criticism, but who also has a niggling inkling that this might, on occasion, be a bit of a cop-out – a student who nurses the suspicion that a keener eye to her own environment would reveal rich and exciting material that brims with promise, but who lacks the references or the method to approach such material, and is unsure of its validity. The other is a more cynical listener; the type of person who grimaces at the title of this thesis and sees ethnography as, at best, the latest trend to be acknowledged in funding applications and at worst, a serious threat to the discipline.

One of the starting points of this thesis was a familiar object of study; a book, but I began by contemplating its meaning in relation to a café, and personal memories, before moving through family narratives of stinky cheese and pizza dough, a walking tour and social club, an (in)famous chef and his cookbooks, another café-bar, to finally conclude in a classroom. This is an eclectic mix of ‘stuff’ by any stretch of the imagination. But it is all *Italian* stuff; and so, it would seem fair to assume, ought to be of some interest to Italian Studies. The sheer diversity of these objects and spaces also makes this ‘stuff’ ideal for the multi-sited ethnography that Gellner suggests

offers the most promising critical path to interpreting meanings that move between cultures.⁴⁵⁴ Accordingly, I have tried to tease out the significance of these various objects; individually and holistically, to reflect critically on what it is about Italian-ness that is valued, why, by whom, and in what context – and what this might mean. In the last chapter, we explored some of the implications of the nature of this investigation for language teaching, focusing on how an ethnographic sensitivity can be brought into the language learning classroom at all levels.

Throughout, I have been especially concerned with images of ‘traditional’ Italy, with Italy’s authenticity; what elements of ‘traditional’, ‘authentic’ Italian-ness can be claimed for consumption, and what their desirability may indicate. Our study began in Terroni, with Chapter II showing how the commercial value of the visible ‘authenticity’ of this site is intertwined with personal meaning and memory. Val’s identification of her changing relationship with Italy and her Italian heritage throughout the life course was used to problematize the attribution of nostalgic recreations to a collective desire, as some scholars have suggested, for social anchoring in the insecurity of postmodernity. Via a close reading of Agnello Hornby’s *Il pranzo di Mosè*, I indicated how bucolic visions of ‘Italy-as-elsewhere’ are disrupted and re-appropriated on an individual level. Here, my analysis focused on how the author’s re-creation of Italy through the work of cuisine can be read as a ‘constructive’ form of nostalgia which celebrates the rituals of kinship work and promotes a self-reflexive engagement with one’s present surroundings.

Reviewing the disparate material surveyed in Chapter II, the first point I would like to underline is that ethnographic approaches do not work contrary to the tools of traditional textual analysis. An ethnographic approach as I see it is about offering the Modern Languages scholar a means to pursue themes across different sites; ethnography is a close reading and reflective writing of the everyday, the spontaneous, and the unwritten, which enables us to draw out commonalities or to probe apparent synchronies across different sites, *including* literature. The intermedial and reflexive approach favoured by ethnography can thus ultimately work to reinforce the value of textual analysis: only by setting my analysis of the visual and

⁴⁵⁴ Gellner, ‘Uncomfortable Antinomies. Going Beyond Methodical Nationalism in Social and Cultural Anthropology’, in *Beyond Methodological Nationalism*, ed. by Amelina, Nergiz, Faist and Glick Schiller (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 111-28 (p. 114).

practical functions performed by Terroni alongside a critical examination of the novels of Agnello Hornby could I indicate the broader significance of re-creations of the past. Similarly, I would argue that Wren-Owens's attention to the commodification of ethnicity in Italian-Welsh narratives is only strengthened by her care to allude to the broader cultural evaluation in which the production of these novels is situated, an approach which bespeaks an ethnographic sensitivity that, as Wren-Owens suggests, merits further attention.⁴⁵⁵ I would also be tempted to argue that Jordan's approach to (in)hospitality in the work of Marie NDiaye and her attention to visual culture bears the marks of her experience of ethnography.⁴⁵⁶ These are scholars working within Modern Languages, committed to the study of literature, but who allude to the utility of ethnographic approaches in seeking to situate the relevance of literary inquiry within the broader world of cultural production, reception, and experience. The question then is not one of threatening the place of literature per se, but of querying why certain texts are studied, to what end, and how far they ought to be uncritically privileged. As Phipps and Gonzalez put it:

Of course, if modern languages have as their principle purpose the reception and assimilation of a canon of texts representing timeless and universal values, the filter of experience is entirely unnecessary. If the text is the sole landscape through which the learner is expected to travel, then all encounters are predictable and resolved by the application of general, abstract rules. If, however, the learning of modern languages is at every stage an encounter and an engagement with the living world of that language, then different approaches are required.⁴⁵⁷

I would say 'multiple', rather than 'different'; I want to underline that ethnography is not about replacing the study of one cultural product with another, but of cultivating complementary approaches to the study of culture and broadening the field of inquiry to include a multitude of objects, encounters, and experiences. With this goal in mind, one way to develop the investigation I have started here within Italian Studies could

⁴⁵⁵ Wren-Owens, 'The delayed emergence of Italian Welsh narratives, or class and the commodification of ethnicity'.

⁴⁵⁶ Shirley Jordan, 'Looking for Marie NDiaye: Autofictional Fragments from *Autoportrait en vert* (2005) to *Cheffe, roman d'une cuisinière* (2016)', paper presented at 'Women's Self-Representation in the Digital Age' conference, IMLR London, 10 March 2017.

⁴⁵⁷ Phipps and Gonzalez, p. 124.

be through a focus on the sensorial in narrative itself. I have limited my analysis to *Il pranzo di Mosè*, but the haptic pleasure that I have suggested that Agnello Hornby's writing endeavours to recreate may be traced across a range of similar memoirs. The growing popularity of the culinary memoir and the Italy presented within these sensory texts indicates both the genre and the currency of this type of image of Italy as productive sites of inquiry.

Angelica Pesarini's consideration of tactile strategies for home-making in unfamiliar environments promises to prove helpful in this regard.⁴⁵⁸ Pesarini argues that embodied processes such as physically touching people and things can constitute a quotidian project to 'make space belong', that is, to create and claim a personal space of belonging, thus inviting acknowledgement of new ways of belonging beyond the traditional psychological understanding of interpersonal affect.⁴⁵⁹ Already, writing in relation to contemporary migration, Paul Jones and Michal Kryzyzanowski have sought to expand understanding of belonging; whilst conceding that 'a sense of belonging is to some extent based on an exclusion of the other', Jones and Kryzyzanowski suggest that 'one's belonging can be made up of a combination of elected attachments that sometimes do not need validation or endorsement by the 'in-group'".⁴⁶⁰ On the one hand, then, the attention that the genre of culinary memoir pays to embodied experiences; the sounds, smells, and tastes of an 'elsewhere' and its re-creation through food make these texts a useful departure point for contemplating the negotiation of a sense of self in relation to more intimate and physical tactics that enable individuals to claim space, to be 'rightly placed'. On the other, their blend of personal, highly sensory memories and practical culinary advice

⁴⁵⁸ Angelica Pesarini, "I Thought It Would Have Been a Perfect World". Postcolonial Geographies of Home and Belonging', paper presented at 'Trespassing the Borders: Redefining Postcolonialism from Peripheral Experiences' conference, University of Warwick, 11 March 2017.

⁴⁵⁹ For example, Abraham Maslow's early human motivation theory proposed belonging as 'a hunger' for affectionate relationship with people in general, and David W. McMillan and David Chavis recognised it as part of acceptance by and in a community. See Abraham Maslow, 'A Theory of Human Motivation', *Psychological Review*, 50 (1943), 370-96, and David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis, 'Psychological Sense of Community: A definition and theory', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 14 (1986), 6-23.

⁴⁶⁰ Paul Jones, and Michal Kryzyzanowski, 'Identity, Belonging and Migration: Beyond Constructing "Others"', in *Identity, Belonging and Migration* ed. by Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak, and Paul Jones (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp. 38-53 (p. 47).

appears to respond to a desire for the ‘safe spice’ of exoticism,⁴⁶¹ a complex mix which merits further critical attention.

In his reading of the work of the French ethnographic scholar Victor Segalen, Charles Forsdick has suggested the possibility of viewing ‘exoticism as a reciprocal process involving the generation of mutual knowledge and associated with processes of intercultural contact alternative to those of colonialism’, going on to call for ‘a re-exploration of the field of the exotic’.⁴⁶² Indulging yet simultaneously troubling the simplistic objectification with which exoticism is usually associated through their articulations of personal affect, texts like *Il pranzo di Mosè*, such as Mary Contini’s *Dear Francesca* and *Dear Olivia*, and Anna Del Conte’s *Risotto with Nettles*,⁴⁶³ to name but a few examples, offer a departure point for this type of inquiry and I think bear scrutiny within a broader landscape of texts relating haptic experiences of Italy, both those written from an ‘insider’ perspective, such as Clara Sereni’s *Casalinghitudine*,⁴⁶⁴ and those more typically linked with an exoticizing gaze – D. H. Lawrence’s collection of writings on Italy springs to mind here as a useful point of comparison.⁴⁶⁵

A vital part of such a study, I think, would be the development of a more sophisticated framework for engaging with the otherness of familial pasts. Whilst the continued influence of *traumatic* memory on subsequent generations has been the recipient of much stimulating critical analysis, the question of how other, non-traumatic family pasts are invoked is an important one that forces us to critically re-think our understanding of ‘the self’ as a historical construction, but is – as yet – under-researched. By conceptualizing heritage as a gift to examine the personal narratives of Val and Silvestro, Chapter III has taken a first step in this direction. In considering Val’s and Silvestro’s ‘inherited’ Italian and Neapolitan identities, I pointed to the need to empathetically read family heritage as a site of personal affect whilst acknowledging problems of bloodline affiliation, indicating how the ‘otherness’ of

⁴⁶¹ Charles Forsdick, ‘Revisiting exoticism: from colonialism to postcolonialism’, in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A critical introduction*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003), pp. 46-55 (p. 48), cf. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* ed. by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (Oxford: Routledge, 1998), pp. 94-5.

⁴⁶² Forsdick, p. 51.

⁴⁶³ Anna Del Conte, *Risotto with Nettles* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2009).

⁴⁶⁴ Clara Sereni, *Casalinghitudine* (Turin: Einaudi, 1987).

⁴⁶⁵ D. H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy* [1916], *Sea and Sardinia* [1921], and *Sketches of Etruscan Places* [1927], in D. H. Lawrence, *D. H. Lawrence and Italy* (London: Penguin, 2007).

family pasts can be capitalized upon as a resource. In my analysis of the oral narratives of Val and Silvestro I have limited myself to highlighting the tension between the use-value of family pasts and their exchange value, but the implications of the relationship between the past-as-property, the present, personal meaning and collective value require much wider interdisciplinary attention, not least because these questions require a sensitive recognition of participants as human beings.

To some extent, Chapter IV developed this line of inquiry by probing into some of the present-day, lived consequences of the connection between the desirability of authenticity and colonialist notions of selfhood that was proposed in Chapter III. Again, this chapter juxtaposed different types of material and methods to indicate the contradictory processes embedded in the appeal of the authentic. An analysis of the problematic connotations of the authentic performance of Italian-ness enacted by TV chef and celebrity personality Gino D'Acampo set against an examination of the 'authentic Italian experience' proffered for sale by walking tour operator SharedCity revealed the complex interrelation between exoticized visions of otherness and a meaningful sociality. There were, however, several comments in different transcripts I feel I could have included to further my arguments in Chapters III and IV but that I ultimately, albeit reluctantly, have decided to omit, despite having ethical approval from participants who had reviewed their interview transcripts. Contrary to popular belief, the official ethical approval procedure was actually one of the easiest elements of the research process, but I felt that to include certain comments would jeopardize the relationship I had built with my participants and make them vulnerable to accusations that they would be unable to defend themselves against. In part, this is due to my inexperience; re-reading transcripts, it is clear there are occasions when I ought to have challenged participants more and contested comments they made to give them the chance to explain their own perspective and perhaps re-think it. At the start of this project, I thought being a good interviewer meant being a good listener; speaking as little as possible in order to allow participants to expand their ideas freely, and not disputing or querying their statements. But there is an injustice in this, I realise now, in that by keeping silent I was perhaps inadvertently signaling agreement with more awkward or confusing statements that needed further clarification – I was not practicing a dialogic conversation! Precisely as Caroline Tagg, Agnieszka Lyons, Rachel Hu and Frances Rock have suggested in their reflections on the implications of close researcher-researched relationships, my viewpoint as the

researcher enabled me to apprehend wider implications of publishing which participants themselves were unlikely to be able to consider when giving consent,⁴⁶⁶ and it is worth bearing in mind that such a risk is perhaps inherent to ethnography and the relationship of trust on which it is founded.

This brings me to the second point I want to make; that meaningful and ethical ethnography requires a reflexive investment in research participants and material, ideally over a long term and with the support of a wider team. To illustrate this point, it is helpful to reflect on where I have failed – on what the thesis has *not* been able to do, and why.

My only critique of Fortier's ethnography of Italian migrant belongings was that I felt she underestimated the role language plays in mediating experience. This is something I have tried to address in the thesis holistically by a close attention to the complex and contradictory meanings ascribed to language, to how we speak and to the words we pronounce – indeed, by manipulating some of these meanings myself – and in particular in the last chapter, 'Words', by emphasizing the negative coding of some forms of language and the effects of their creative re-inscription with use-value. But this is not how I had hoped to tackle the question of language. Mid-way through my research, I visited Caffè Italia, a coffee bar run by Italians of Bangladeshi origin, where I was treated with a polite indifference until I spoke Italian. Looking back on this conversation in the weeks that followed, I was conscious that from the perspective of a so-called 'native' Italian's eyes, it would be quite uncanny to witness the Italian North-South divide amicably played out in London's East End with an Asian Milanese barista lauding the cleanliness and the infrastructures of Milan but conceding, to a white English student 'passing' as Neapolitan, the 'fascino' ('appeal') of Naples (amidst the broader chorus of fellow coffee drinkers that 'è finita l'Italia, è finita' – 'Italy's finished, it's finished – and despairing hand gestures). Clearly, this would have been a very different conversation if I did not speak Italian and is unlikely

⁴⁶⁶ Caroline Tagg, Agnieszka Lyons, Rachel Hu, and Frances Rock, 'The ethics of digital ethnography in a team project', *Applied Linguistics Review* 8.2-3 (2017), 271-92 (p. 274), cf. Kakali Bhattacharya, 'Consenting to the Consent Rorm: What Are the Fixed and Fluid Understandings Between the Researcher and the Researched?', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13.8 (2007), 1095-115, and Fiona Copland and Angela Creese, 'Ethical Issues in Linguistic Ethnography: Balancing the Micro and the Macro', in *Ethics in Applied Linguistics Research: Language Researcher Narratives*, ed. by Peter. I. De Costa (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 138-54.

to have taken place at all. The scene came to my mind when I read sociolinguist Stephen May's assertion that, 'to say that language is not an inevitable feature of identity is thus not the same as saying it is unimportant'.⁴⁶⁷ I became increasingly interested in how it had been an unexpectedly shared language, and perhaps specifically the regional inflections which bore out our respective experiences of Italy, which enabled our dialogue and humour, and was keen to investigate this as part of my research. Through my partner, I also had a connection with Arnhem Wharf Primary, a large three-form entry school in the linguistically and ethnically diverse London Borough of Tower Hamlets, which is attended by a small number of pupils of similar heritage, usually described, I observed, by staff members as 'Italian' on account of their linguistic skills. In both of these situations, language is the primary sign of the subjects' national belonging; a sign enabling the external validation of being 'Italian' that is otherwise denied on account of their non-whiteness.⁴⁶⁸

One of my biggest frustrations of the project is that ultimately I have not been able to interview Bengali-Italian pupils at Arnhem Wharf; I still feel it was a real missed opportunity for meaningful collaboration and research. The situation with Caffè Italia is slightly different. I believe that if I had pushed at this stage in my research, some of the men who frequent Caffè Italia would grant me an interview. I am also certain that such an interview would be exactly the kind of forced performativity and awkward question-and-answer tick notes that good ethnography tries to dismantle. I am an 'outsider' to this group in many ways; age, gender, ethnicity, religion, life experience, many of which are clearly visible, make my presence suspect. Jordan reports something similar when she explains how her informants felt she was 'spying' on them.⁴⁶⁹ I still hope to research this site and am in the process of engaging participants, but to build the relationship of trust that is essential for ethical and meaningful research is a slow process. Clearly, neither of these cases as they stand represent experiences worth reporting on in their own right but they were an essential part of my research. These two sites and, crucially, my own position within them as a non-Italian, but Italian-speaking, white female researcher have provided a revealing window onto use- and exchange-values in practice, particularly in relation to language

⁴⁶⁷ Stephen May, 'Language rights: Moving the debate forward', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 9 (2005), 319-47 (p. 330).

⁴⁶⁸ On carrying signs of national belonging see Skeggs, p. 19, cf. Bourdieu, 'Social space and symbolic power', *Sociological Theory*, 7 (1989), 14-25.

⁴⁶⁹ Roberts et al., p. 108.

and being a 'national subject'. Through working with the school I was also rewarded with the opportunity to observe and participate in teaching practice in a multilingual primary school; an experience which has informed the thesis's attention to the classroom as a key site of cultural exchange. What they point to, I think, is the need to recognize the validity of the process of ethnography and re-think how such research is narrated.

Mockingly dubbing ethnography 'a waste of time'; Yasmin Gunaratnam sums up the frustrations of the lengthy and obstruction-riddled procedure of identifying, engaging and building a relationship with potential gate-keepers or informants and research participants, arranging and recording interviews, typing up transcripts and participant review that goes into the final report.⁴⁷⁰ I am not saying this work is more difficult or time-consuming than archival work or other types of research; merely that it requires a different sort of investment; an investment that bears witnessing, because it impacts upon the research, but not one that may not be best captured in the more traditional forms of write-up.

The differences between Simone Varriale's ongoing project and my own are illustrative here. I was initially surprised to read, in an interim report of his study of recent Italian migrants to London and the Midlands, that he has found:

Participants will mobilise a well-entrenched myth about British society: that it is more 'meritocratic' than Italy, and that their success is simply an individual outcome of their talent and hard work. Italians' belief in this cultural myth plays a crucial role in blinding them to the structural divisions of British society. Some of my respondents firmly believe that if someone doesn't 'make it' in the UK, this must be entirely their fault.⁴⁷¹

I had found quite the opposite; many of the Italian (and incidentally, Spanish) migrants to London I had spoken to in the early stages of my research seemed to seize the opportunity to talk about the difficulties of moving to London, the

⁴⁷⁰ Yasmin Gunaratnam, 'Researching Urban Multiculture' panel at New Urban Multicultures: Conviviality and Racism conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, 17 May 2016.

⁴⁷¹ Simone Varriale, 'EU Migrants: Differences, Inequalities and Distinctions', *The Sociological Review*, 1 June 2017, online: <<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/eu-migrants-differences-inequalities-and-distinctions-1.html>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

inhospitality of the city, in some cases, their intention to return, which were not presented as a failure on their part nor of their friends but rather an understanding that the ‘myth’ of London was precisely that. I think a decisive factor here was how these speakers viewed me. Whereas Simone is an Italian male university researcher with the title of Dr., I was ‘una studentessa’ (‘a student’), ‘quella ragazza che sta facendo uno studio sul cibo’ (‘that girl doing a study about food’), and sometimes, ‘l’inglesina’ (‘the English girl’). By referring to me in these terms, speakers implicitly revealed that they saw me as a younger ‘learner’, which will have impacted on how they presented themselves. The fact that Italian is not my first language, together with the particular cadence I have retained from my years living in Abruzzo, also contributed to this dynamic; on occasion I had to remind more elderly, northern Italians that I was not Italian or the daughter of Southern Italian migrants, whereas it was novelty and source of amusement for younger Italians to hear the mix of a ‘Stanlio and Olio’ accent with Abruzzo dialect that I think made them feel more relaxed in my presence, and certainly more authoritative; they would often explain things to me that they thought I wouldn’t have known.

This is not to say that one set of data is more ‘true’ than another – it wouldn’t surprise me if Simone and I had by chance interviewed the same person. I just want to point out the significance of the circumstances of production in this type of research and the impact of how the ethnographer is read by participants on the results. In the same vein, Gellner has provocatively claimed that the most mistake-ridden, but also the most productive, fieldwork experiences are age-related and possibly gender-related, noting:

A very large proportion of these new ethnographies are by women. The young have another advantage: they sit much more readily into the student role [...]. It is a comfortable position for the ethnographer to inhabit - both for the ethnographer and for her hosts. As one gets older, it is harder and harder to fit into the inconspicuous person of ‘junior person needing to be instructed’. The older you are, the more you are expected to be authoritative, to teach, to *know*.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² Gellner, pp. 119-20.

On the same occasion that Gunaratnam commented on the long, and often lonely, route of the ethnographer, Les Back remarked that if anyone wanted to review or write about urban culture and racism in post-war South London council estates in the latter half of the 1980s, he had a room full of boxes of notes and tape recordings gathering dust.⁴⁷³ I couldn't tell if Back was joking or not because many ethnographers are wary about sharing their material (myself included). As the comparison between my perspective and Simone Varriale's indicates, this is not solely for the protection of participants, but also because these recorded conversations are very much the result of a dialogue: a co-created story in which the researcher has a personal stake. One resolute conclusion, therefore, that I will draw from this project is that there needs to be more recognition of the research process itself through alternative ways of reporting and reflecting on the different stages of ethnography that occur before and after the 'official' outcome of an academic publication. When the labour and the positionality of a researcher is in some way made visible, the reader (or viewer, or audience) ultimately has a more complete understanding of the research itself; a point, perhaps, with the potential for wider application given that academic research in the Humanities generally is understood in terms of outputs rather than process or practice.

The researcher vignettes developed by Creese and Blackledge,⁴⁷⁴ and used to great effect by Tagg et al. to reflect on the ethics of digital ethnography in a team project,⁴⁷⁵ are one example of the type of practice that could easily be more systematically introduced into Modern Languages. Another way, as Roberts et al. indicate, drawing on Jordan's research, is to bring these challenges into classroom experience – perhaps even via the researcher vignettes, which could be used very effectively in relation to the Year Abroad.⁴⁷⁶ Clearly, the 'Beyond Borders' exhibition of was in itself a primary element of the TML project, and perhaps the only effective way for the material I contributed to be shared. Though there are several issues which need to

⁴⁷³ New Urban Multicultures: Conviviality and Racism conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, 17 May 2016.

⁴⁷⁴ Angela Creese, Adrian Blackledge, Arvind Bhatt, Carla Jonsson, Kaspar Juffermans, Jinling Li, Peter Martin, Anu Muhonen, and Jaspreet K. Takhi, 'Researching Bilingual and Multi-lingual education Multilingually: A Linguistic Ethnography Approach', in *Handbook of Bilingual and Multilingual Education*, ed. by Malden Wayne E. Wright, Sovicheth Boun, and Ofelia García (MA & Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 127-44.

⁴⁷⁵ Tagg et al., pp. 271-92.

⁴⁷⁶ Roberts et al., p. 108.

be addressed before taking this kind of work forward, the reception of the exhibition *within* academia points promisingly to a growing recognition of alternative outcomes of research beyond that of journal articles and monographs; new ways of writing, telling, showing and creating research. I think we also need to explore further the extent to which ethnography itself can be considered a form of public engagement; I certainly felt that some of the people I worked with had a slightly different – and slightly more positive – idea about what Modern Languages might be after discussing my project.

Most importantly, though, and related to all these ideas, is the fact that if we are to go beyond very minor projects like my own, we need to embrace ethnography as a collaborative enterprise. As Gellner highlights, young postgraduates are often the best positioned to conduct fieldwork, both because of how they are positioned in the field but also quite practically, in terms of their professional commitments, which are likely to be less demanding than those of more senior scholars. Whilst the latter can benefit from the anthropological perspective that they would have neither the time nor, perhaps, if we are convinced by Gellner's reasoning, the means, to access in person, early career scholars would have much to gain from the experience of co-producing research, not least co-authoring reports, with well-established scholars, who can guide them through the process of writing, review and develop the theoretical sophistication and relevance of interventions. Similarly, and more importantly, we need to invest in the opportunities to collaborate beyond academia; to engage with the skills participants bring to the table. This is a process which in itself generates occasions for productive methodological reflection. Again, the work of Tagg et al. is informative here for its identification of the necessity of team support and shared reflexivity when confronting ethical challenges in ethnography:

Our experiences suggest that reflexivity needs to be accompanied by an awareness of the potential emotional burden of relationship-building within an ethnographic project, as well as the provision of team support for those engaged in managing the complex research relationships that span field visits, private face-to-face encounters, and digital interactions.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁷ Tagg et al., p. 228, cf. Fiona Copland and Angela Creese, 'Ethical Issues in Linguistic

With these imperatives, and indeed opportunities, in mind, I think *any* Modern Languages researcher interested in contemporary culture ought to be asking themselves the following questions: Would my research benefit from an ethnographic perspective? *If* so, would I be able to conduct the necessary fieldwork alone? If not, who might be better placed? What difference would collaborating make? And crucially: how can I support this process and make it worthwhile for my co-researchers?

My final point is timeliness. When I read *Modern Languages: Learning and Teaching in an Intercultural Field* and *Language Learners as Ethnographers*, I didn't know whether to smile or pull my hair out. On the one hand, it was stimulating and rewarding to find the types of ideas I was practically exploring discussed clearly and comprehensively by well-established scholars. On the other, I was frustrated: why was I still feeling the need to justify my research, to prove the validity of ethnography, to confront the prejudice that greets ethnographic approaches within Modern Languages? Why had these eloquent, convincing, and theoretically-grounded arguments, some made almost twenty years ago, fallen on deaf ears, and why would I hope that the practical application of such reasoning in a small PhD project could persuade a similar audience to think differently?

Perhaps because I don't think I am addressing a similar audience. I don't just mean that my implied reader, as I stated when I set out, is a student, or a postgraduate language tutor, rather than the more experienced language teachers and well-established scholars that these authors address. These texts were ahead of their time, and I think we are now catching up. I suggested in the introductory chapter of this thesis that it is possible to track increasing interest in material cultural studies from within Modern Languages. During the course of this project, a special issue of *Modern Languages Open* heralded a 'material turn' in migration studies, with the authors explicitly looking to galvanize the *methodological* diversity that ethnography encourages.⁴⁷⁸ The contrast between this invitation with the struggle of Phipps and Gonzalez is marked; reading the words of Phipps and Gonzalez and Roberts et al. today, it is clear that these authors were writing at a time when they very much had

Ethnography: Balancing the Micro and the Macro'.

⁴⁷⁸ Cangbai Wang, 'Introduction: The "material turn" in migration studies', *Modern Languages Open Special Issue, 'The "Material Turn" in Migration Studies* (2016), 1-11 (p. 6)

to justify their terminology – articulating an alternative vision through neologism – and *define* the meaning of words like ‘intercultural’. Reporting on the generalization of their findings, Roberts et al. suggest that the major difficulty is in learning situations where

Learners cannot break out of the walls of the classroom, where neither fieldwork or telematics are available. The difficulties of presenting learners with intercultural experience, with opportunities to engage with others, to investigate and analyse and establish relationships, are evident and not underestimated. They are perhaps also the reason why many teachers, themselves often with no intercultural experience, focus exclusively on linguistic competence, with perhaps some attention to sociolinguistic and discourse competences, but certainly no attempt to develop intercultural competence. This therefore remains an imponderable, but insofar as the social and cultural conditions of the contemporary world are the source of new experiences of interculturality and the re-conceptualisation of the learner as ethnographer and intercultural speaker, it is also possible that classrooms too will change in as yet unforeseen ways which will facilitate the acquisition of intercultural competence.⁴⁷⁹

Almost twenty years later, it is very difficult to imagine a classroom in UK Higher Education where neither fieldwork nor telematics are available. The ‘hows’ of engaging with the new, vague experiences of diversity that the authors hint has become a pressing issue at the very heart of Modern Languages; it is less a case of justifying the use of words such as ‘intercultural competence’ but making them *mean* something beyond an empty keyword pounded out on funding applications. But perhaps most importantly, we seem to be in a moment in which significant value is placed upon a curious sensitivity to one’s sense of self in relation to one’s surroundings. I would like to end by inviting you to think about a leaflet I received about half-way through the research of this project which I think is indicative of a current, broader receptivity to the type of understanding generated by ethnography.

⁴⁷⁹ Roberts et al., p. 243.

In Autumn 2015, my local council magazine ran a feature on mental health. Under the title 'Feeling Good', the magazine reported that one in five people living in Lewisham are affected by common mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression - apparently higher than the London and England averages. Dr. Danny Ruta, Director of Public Health for Lewisham Council, consequently recommended five steps everyone should take to improve their mental health. I'm sure you've seen something similar. It was quite a typical list of wellbeing advice which included things like being active, giving to others, being sociable, continuing learning – 'new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course?' – and, most interestingly, 'Take notice':

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a train, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.⁴⁸⁰

It seems to me that this is advice which resonates profoundly both with the values that we have interpreted in the images of Italy discussed here; a sensory engagement with one's surroundings, investment in meaningful processes in quotidian acts and habits, a commuted sociality; *and* with the reflexivity and sensitivity that ethnographic approaches seek to cultivate. This thesis has argued, by way of practical example, that ethnography is critically valuable in research and, perhaps even more so, in language teaching, and eminently feasible in both terms of finance and resources. So when it comes to bringing ethnographic approaches into Modern Languages teaching and research, given the apparent receptivity of the contemporary climate to alternative, more reflexive forms of knowledge-sharing, my question is: why not?

⁴⁸⁰ *Lewisham Life*, Autumn 2015 (London: Lewisham Council, 2015).

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